

# Flexible cystoscopy



## Information for patients

Northern General Hospital





## **What is a flexible cystoscopy?**

A flexible cystoscopy is a minor procedure in which a urologist (a doctor who specialises in bladder conditions) examines your bladder and urethra using an instrument called a cystoscope.

A cystoscope is a thin, fibre optic tube that has a light and a camera at one end. It's inserted into the urethra (the tube that carries urine out of the body) and moved up into the bladder.

The camera relays images to a screen, where they can be seen by the urologist.

The procedure is usually carried out in the outpatient department, which means you will be able to go home on the same day.

## **Why do I need a cystoscopy?**

A flexible cystoscopy is usually performed to investigate problems or changes with the bladder and drainage of urine. This allows your doctor to look inside the urethra and bladder. Additional tests, for example a biopsy, may be performed as part of the investigation.

## **Are there any alternatives to a cystoscopy?**

For some conditions a cystoscopy is the only way to get a detailed view of your urinary system. Your doctor will discuss this with you including any alternatives should they be available.

## **What does the procedure involve?**

An antibiotic injection is usually given before the procedure to reduce the risk of any infection developing.

We use local anaesthetic gel to lubricate and numb the urethra. This makes the insertion of the instrument into the bladder as comfortable as possible. Attached to the instrument are a telescopic lens, a light source and some sterile water to fill the bladder so that all the lining can be inspected.

Once the instrument is in place, the examination takes a few minutes to complete.

A nurse will remain with you during the examination to explain anything you do not understand.

## **Are there any risks to a having a cystoscopy?**

A cystoscopy is usually a safe procedure and serious complications are rare. Occasionally, there may be problems passing urine or an infection may develop.

### **Urinary tract infections**

Urinary tract infections (UTIs) are infections of the urethra, bladder or kidneys. Symptoms of a UTI can include:

- a burning sensation when urinating that lasts longer than two days
- a high temperature (fever) of 38°C (100.4°F) or above
- unpleasant smelling urine
- nausea and vomiting
- pain in your lower back or side

Contact your GP or hospital staff as soon as possible if you have any of the above symptoms. Antibiotics can be used to successfully treat most UTIs.

### **Problems passing urine**

Some people find it difficult to pass urine after having a cystoscopy. This is known as urinary retention. Urinary retention after a cystoscopy is uncommon in women, but men with pre-existing urination problems are at increased risk.

Urinary retention may be a sign that your urethra (the tube that carries urine out of the body) or your prostate (in men) is swollen, so you should contact staff at the hospital where you had the cystoscopy if you experience this problem.

In some cases, a thin tube called a catheter may need to be temporarily inserted through your urethra to allow urine to drain.

### **Bleeding and bladder damage**

Mild bleeding that lasts for a few days is common after having a cystoscopy, particularly if a biopsy (tissue sample) was taken during the procedure. However, in rare cases, bleeding may be a sign that your bladder has been damaged.

Seek immediate medical advice if you have persistent or severe bleeding after a cystoscopy, because you may need to have a temporary catheter fitted or surgery to repair any damage to your bladder.

## **What should I expect after the procedure?**

In some cases, the urologist will be able to discuss the results of your cystoscopy and any associated implications with you as soon as you recover from the anaesthetic.

However, it can sometimes take a few days for the results to become available. If a biopsy was taken, it may take several weeks for the results to come back.

A follow-up appointment may be arranged to discuss the results of the procedure.

## **Is there anything I should look out for?**

Although the complications listed above are well recognised, most patients do not suffer any problems. You should however seek further medical advice should you experience:

- Fever
- Severe pain
- Other symptoms of a urinary tract infection (see risk section above)
- Any problems passing urine
- Persistent or severe bleeding

## Who should I contact if I have any concerns?

If you have any concerns after your procedure you should contact the Spinal Injuries Centre as follows:

### Urology Nurse Specialists

Paula Muter and Carol Eggington:

- **0114 271 5624** or
- **0114 243 4343** and ask for Bleep **2494**

or Marie Watson:

- **0114 226 6823** or
- **0114 243 4343** and ask for Bleep **2882**

### Spinal Injuries Outpatient Department

Alternatively you can contact the Spinal Outpatient Department:

- **0114 271 5677**



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