

Flexible Cystoscopy (Endoscopic Examination of the Bladder)

What is a cystoscopy?

A cystoscopy is a procedure in which a doctor inserts a lighted instrument, called a cystoscope, into the urethra in order to examine the inside of the urethra and the bladder.

The cystoscope is as thin as a pencil and has lenses like a telescope or microscope. These lenses let the doctor focus on the inner surfaces of the urinary tract. The images are transferred to a camera and monitor system with option for you to watch the procedure if you wish

Why is a cystoscopy carried out?

Cystoscopy may be done for any one of a number of reasons including frequent urinary tract infections, loss of bladder control (incontinence) or an overactive bladder, blood in the urine, unusual cells that have been found in urine sample, the need for a bladder catheter, chronic pelvic pain and a stone in the urinary tract.

How is a cystoscopy carried out?

No special preparation is required. Please eat and drink normally and take your usual medication (unless you have been advised otherwise).

The procedure takes place in the Operating Theatres where you will be asked to wear a hospital gown, in the procedure room a sterile sheet will be placed over you. The local anaesthetic jelly is then introduced into the urethra then your water pipe will feel numb. Once that happens the small telescope is introduced and your bladder filled with sterile water to enable us to see the inside of it, the whole process takes around 20 minutes. You then go back to your room for a short while and then home.

You may pass a small amount of blood in your urine for 24-48 hours, mild tingling and stinging sensation in the urethra may last for 24 hours.

The main adverse effect of cystoscopy is 5%* incidence of urinary infection (the risk is slightly higher in people who have suffered infections in the past). This can be reduced significantly by drinking plenty of fluids following the procedure. If your stinging and burning sensation lasted more than 24-48 hours or you are feeling unwell with fever you would require medical advice and treatment with antibiotics.

*) Almallah et al, Urinary tract infection and patient satisfaction after flexible cystoscopy and urodynamic evaluation. Urology 56:37-39, 2000.