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## Bronchoscopy

### What is a bronchoscopy?

A bronchoscopy is a procedure in which your health care provider examines the airways to your lungs with a thin, flexible, lighted tube called a bronchoscope.

### When is it used?

This procedure may be done because:

- You have an irritation, growth, or scar tissue in part of your lungs or the airways to the lungs.
- There may be an inherited deformity in the lungs.
- There may be a foreign body, such as a peanut or coin, in your lungs.
- You may need your lungs checked for signs of cancer.
- You have a cough or you are coughing up blood.
- You need to have cultures taken to diagnose an infection.
- You need to have a small sample of lung tissue (biopsy) taken for lab tests.

### How do I prepare for a bronchoscopy?

Plan for your care and recovery after the procedure, especially if you are to have general anesthesia. Find someone to drive you home after the surgery. Allow for time to rest and try to find other people to help you with your day-to-day duties.

Follow your health care provider's instructions about not smoking before and after the procedure. Smokers heal more slowly after surgery. They are also more likely to have breathing problems during surgery. For this reason, if you are a smoker, you should quit at least 2 weeks before the procedure. It is best to quit 6 to 8 weeks before surgery. Also, your wounds will heal much better if you do not smoke after the surgery.

Follow any other instructions your provider gives you. Eat a light meal, such as soup or salad, the night before the procedure. Do not eat or drink anything after midnight or the morning before the procedure. Do not even drink any coffee, tea, or water. Do not swallow water when you brush your teeth.

### What happens during the procedure?

You are given a local or general anesthetic. A local anesthetic may be sprayed into your nose and mouth to prevent gagging when the tube is passed through your mouth. If you have a local anesthetic, you may also be given a sedative to relax you. A general anesthetic relaxes your muscles, puts you to sleep, and prevents you from feeling pain.

Your health care provider will pass a tube into your mouth and throat, down the windpipe, and into the lungs. If your provider finds cancer cells, growths, sores, or other unhealthy tissue, he or she may remove them or take a sample. If a foreign body is found, it is usually removed.

## What happens after the procedure?

You may go home soon after the procedure or stay in the hospital for several hours or overnight, depending on what was done and your condition after the procedure. You will feel some soreness in your neck. The soreness may last a few days after the procedure. You may be hoarse or have a cough. Lozenges or soothing gargles may be helpful.

Ask your health care provider what else you should do to be comfortable at home. Ask when you should come back for a checkup.

## What are the benefits of this procedure?

This procedure will help your health care provider diagnose and treat your breathing problems. It may relieve your symptoms if you had a foreign body in your airway.

## What are the risks associated with this procedure?

- There are some risks when you have general anesthesia. Discuss these risks with your health care provider.
- Some of your teeth may be chipped if your health care provider uses a rigid tube. Usually flexible fiber-optic bronchoscopes are used instead of the rigid tubes.
- Your jaw may be sore.
- Your throat may be swollen.
- You may have infection and bleeding.

Ask your health care provider how these risks apply to you.

## When should I call my health care provider?

Call your health care provider right away if:

- You have shortness of breath.
- You are coughing up blood.
- You have new or increased wheezing.
- You develop a fever.

Call your health care provider during office hours if:

- You have questions about the procedure or its result.
- You want to make another appointment.

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**Special Instructions:**

## Respiratory System

