

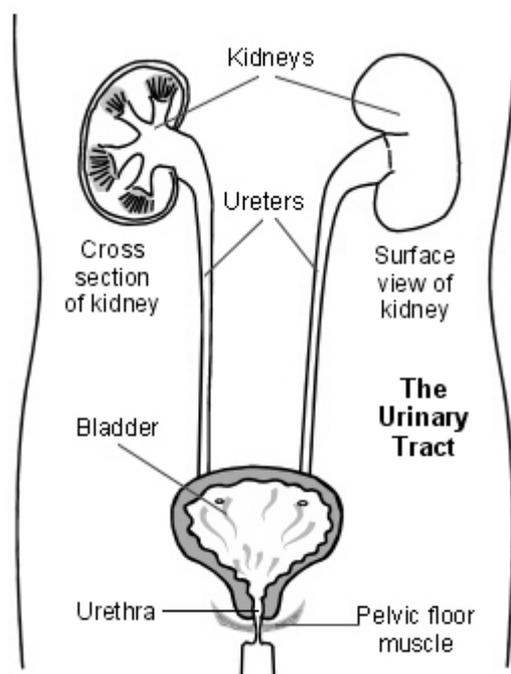
Having a flexible cystoscopy and bladder biopsy under local anaesthetic

This leaflet aims to answer your questions about having a flexible cystoscopy (examination of your bladder) and bladder biopsy (tissue sample). It explains the benefits, risks and alternatives, as well as what you can expect when you come to hospital. If you have any questions, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

What is a cystoscopy?

The urinary system is made up of the:

- kidneys
- ureters – the tubes that link the kidney and bladder
- bladder
- urethra – the tube that urine passes through from the bladder before leaving the body.



Source: diagram copy EMIS and PiP 2006, as distributed on www.patient.co.uk

A cystoscopy is a procedure that looks at the bladder and other parts of the urinary system. It involves inserting a cystoscope (a special tube), into the urethra and then passing it through to the bladder. There are two types of cystoscope: rigid and flexible.

A **rigid cystoscope** is a solid, straight tube with a light at one end and is often used to take samples, or carry out surgery.

Your examination will use a **flexible cystoscope**, which is a fibre-optic tube that can move around bends in the urinary system. It is about the thickness of a pencil and has a tiny video camera on one end, so the doctor can view an image of your urinary system on a screen.

Flexible cystoscopes are generally used to help make a diagnosis or to see if a treatment has been successful.

Both types of cystoscope have side channels, where other instruments can be inserted, for example, to take a biopsy or urine sample, or to remove a ureteric stent (tube in the ureter) if required.

Having the procedure under local anaesthetic in the outpatient department will mean that you get your diagnosis more quickly. It also means that you will not need a general anesthetic or an overnight stay in hospital.

Why do I need a cystoscopy?

Some urinary symptoms – such as those below – are due to problems in the bladder or urethra. Sometimes the cause of your symptoms will be clear from X-rays or tests of your blood or urine, but often the only way your doctor can be sure what is going on is to look inside your bladder.

A cystoscopy can help to diagnose the causes of symptoms such as:

- blood in your urine (haematuria)
- frequent urinary tract infections
- difficulty or pain when urinating (peeing)
- incontinence (inability to control when you pee).

Why do I need a biopsy?

The doctor may have seen an abnormality on a scan or during a flexible cystoscopy. The best way for them to make a diagnosis is to take a sample of tissue from the bladder lining. This means the doctor will be able to plan the next steps in your care.

What are the risks?

There are risks associated with most procedures. Your doctor will explain the possible complications of a cystoscopy and biopsy before asking for your verbal consent to go ahead with the procedure. Please ask any questions you have.

A cystoscopy and biopsy are usually done with no problems at all. Possible side effects are:

- **Discomfort** – you may feel a stinging sensation when you urinate, but this should only last a day or two. Taking your usual pain-relieving medicine as prescribed on the packet may help. If the pain is severe and lasts for more than two days, please contact us or your GP.
- **Bleeding** – you may have a small amount of bleeding from the cystoscope being passed up the urethra and the biopsy site. Some patients do not have any bleeding at all, but some find their urine is slightly pink for a few days after this procedure. Drinking plenty of water (2-3 litres spaced out over 24 hours) can help to clear the urine. If your urine remains pink after a few days, please contact us or your GP.
- **Infection** – a urine infection can cause a fever and pain when you pass urine. The risk of this can be reduced by drinking plenty of water after the procedure.
- **Small risk of perforation (tear) of the bladder** which would mean you need to have a catheter put in your bladder for two weeks while the perforation heals

Rare side effects

- **Temporary insertion of a catheter** – this may be needed if you cannot pass urine normally after the procedure.
- **Delayed bleeding requiring further surgery.**
- **Injury to urethra causing delayed scar formation** – this may need more surgery in the future to widen the urethra.

Are there any alternatives?

A cystoscopy is the only way to have a close enough look at your urinary system to diagnose certain bladder conditions. If there are any alternatives, your doctor will discuss them with you.

Consent – asking for your consent

We want to involve you in decisions about your care and treatment. If you decide to go ahead, you will be asked to sign a consent form. This states that you agree to have the treatment and you understand what it involves.

If you would like more information about our consent process, please speak to a member of staff caring for you.

Before the examination

You may be given an antibiotic before the procedure to reduce the likelihood of developing an infection. You will also have a short consultation with your doctor.

During the examination

You will be asked to lie down on your back and the opening of the urethra and surrounding area will be cleaned. Some gel containing anaesthetic will be put in the urethra. This reduces the discomfort when the cystoscope is inserted.

When the cystoscope has been gently passed into the bladder, the doctor will insert sterile water into your bladder. This is to help your doctor see the lining of your bladder and take the biopsy. It will make your bladder feel full, so you will feel like you need to urinate. This may be uncomfortable. The doctor will then take the biopsy and cauterize (seal) the area to stop it from bleeding. You may feel a strange sensation inside the bladder, but you should not feel too uncomfortable.

The procedure will take about ten minutes. When your doctor has finished the examination, they will gently remove the cystoscope.

When will I get the results?

Your doctor will send the tissue to be examined and we will arrange an appointment or telephone consultation to discuss your results in the next two weeks.

Will I get a follow-up appointment?

Yes, we will give this to you before you go home.

What do I need to do after I go home?

You will be able to return to normal activities on the same day as the procedure, although avoid heavy lifting or strenuous exercise. You will be able to take a bath or shower, and eat and drink normally. You should drink plenty of water (at least two litres per day) to flush out any infection and clear up any bleeding.

Will I need any dressings?

You may want to wear a pad the day after your cystoscopy to protect your clothing from the small amount of bleeding you may have.

Medication

You may be prescribed antibiotics to lower the risk of infection – it is important that you complete the whole course. You must not drink any alcohol until you have finished your course of antibiotics and your symptoms have completely cleared.

What if there are problems at home after the procedure?

Please contact your GP if you:

- are in extreme pain
- have continuous or excessive bleeding
- pass blood clots
- have a raised temperature: 38C (100.4F) or above
- have difficulty passing urine.

If you think it is an emergency, please go straight to your nearest Emergency Department (A&E).

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about having a cystoscopy, please contact the Urology Outpatient Department, **t:** 020 7188 8562 or 8563. For questions about your appointment, call the clinic clerks, **t:** 020 7188 2443, Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm.

Outside these hours, please call Aston Key Ward, **t:** 020 7188 8860 or Florence Ward, **t:** 020 7188 8818.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit, **w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline. **t:** 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

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