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Bronchoscopy Information

This information has been prepared to help you and your relatives understand more about your planned procedure. It also gives you general information about what to expect from the time of your admission to your discharge home from Unitas Hospital, and some practical advice on what to do when you get home.

Reasons For Needing A Bronchoscopy Or EBUS (Endobronchial Ultrasound)

A bronchoscopy is a procedure which can help to diagnose, and sometimes to treat conditions of the airways and lungs. Usually it is performed as an outpatient or day case procedure.

There are a number of reasons why a patient may need a bronchoscopy. These may include coughing up blood, a persistent cough or an abnormal chest X-ray or CT scan. Bronchoscopy is performed routinely in patients after lung transplantation and is helpful in the diagnosis of difficult lung infections, inflammatory conditions and tumours in the lung.

What Is A Bronchoscopy?

A bronchoscopy is a way of looking inside your lungs, while you are under anaesthetic. It is a medical procedure in which a doctor passes a thin flexible telescope, called a bronchoscope, through your mouth and down your windpipe into the lungs. See 'Mild Complications'.

The bronchoscope may be fitted with special equipment like a miniature ultrasound probe (EBUS) which can help to guide the doctor in taking samples at the right area.

What Samples Might Be Taken?

Samples are taken in a variety of ways depending upon the circumstances and can be used to test for infections in the lung, tumours and other sorts of lung disease.

During lung washings or lavage, saline (salt water) is squirted into the airways and then sucked out again, providing a sample of the cells from the lining of the lung.

Various instruments can be passed down the bronchoscope to collect a sample of tissue:

- A thin brush on the end of a wire, used for brushing cells off the lining of the airways.
- A tiny pair of forceps is used to take little bites of lung tissue two to three millimetres in diameter. These are called biopsies.
- A fine needle is used to suck a sample of cells from lymph glands which lie next to the airways in the lungs.

In each case the sample obtained is put into preservative fluid and sent to the laboratory for testing.

What Are The Potential Risks Of Having A Bronchoscopy?

Overall a bronchoscopy is a safe procedure. However, as with any medical prodedure there may be risks involved, which will depend upon the type of procedure being undertaken.

Mild Complications

Some patients notice a sore throat or some fever and sweating about six to twelve hours after bronchoscopy. These symptoms may last a few hours and will go away without any treatment. You may also feel a bit sleepy after the procedure.

Slight bleeding from the lung can occur when biopsies are taken. You may cough some bloodstained phlegm after the procedure.

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More Serious Complications
Occasionally, more serious bleeding happens following a biopsy but this is unusual and occurs in less than one in 100 patients.

Occasionally a chest infection occurs following a bronchoscopy. If you start to cough up yellow/green phlegm or feel especially 'chesty' in the few days following a bronchoscopy this may be a sign of a chest infection. Your GP can advise you about the need for antibiotics.

Occasionally the lung may puncture and collapse when a biopsy is taken. This may result in some pain in the chest and some breathlessness. This rarely happens during bronchoscopy unless a special type of biopsy called a transbronchial biopsy is taken. If you need a transbronchial biopsy during your bronchoscopy, the doctor will talk to you about this beforehand and explain that the specific risk to you of experiencing a puncture during the process is about one in 20 (5%). If a puncture does occur then in five out of 10 cases it heals up by itself. Sometimes you may need to stay in hospital and have a chest drain (a thin tube) inserted in between two ribs under local anaesthetic to remove any air leaking from the lung.

Very Serious Complications
Death from bronchoscopy is exceedingly rare, about one in 5000. When it does occur the patient concerned has almost always been ill in hospital beforehand.

Your consultant will talk to you about the risks outlined above and how these relate to your own medical condition and health.

What Are The Benefits?

Your chest physician has recommended a bronchoscopy because it is felt that the benefit to you of having this test outweighs any risk. The benefit to you will be in obtaining a diagnosis of your chest problem so that the right treatment can be given. In cases where nothing abnormal is found, we can reassure you of this fact. The decision to offer you a bronchoscopy is taken carefully and with your best interests in mind.

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Bronchoscopy +/- Biopsy Patient Consent Form

Medical Aid_____ Number_____

Full Names_____ Surname_____

Address_____

ID Number_____ Sex M ☐ F ☐

I acknowledge that the doctor has explained:

- My medical condition and the proposed procedure, including additional treatment if the doctor finds something unexpected. I understand the risks, including the risks that are specific to me.
- The anaesthetic required for this procedure. I understand the risks, including the risks that are specific to me.
- Other relevant procedure/treatment options and their associated risks.
- My prognosis and the risks of not having the procedure.
- That no guarantee has been made that the procedure will improve my condition even though it has been carried out with due professional care.
- The procedure may include a blood transfusion.
- Tissues and blood may be removed and could be used for diagnosis or management of my condition, stored and disposed of sensitively by the hospital.
- If immediate life-threatening events happen during the procedure, it will be treated based on my discussions with the doctor or my Acute Resuscitation Plan.
- I have been given the Bronchoscopy Information Sheet.
- I was able to ask questions and raise concerns with the doctor about my condition, the proposed procedure and its risks, and my treatment options. My questions and concerns have been discussed and answered to my satisfaction.
- I understand I have the right to change my mind at any time, including after I have signed this form but, preferably following a discussion with my doctor.
- I understand that image/s or video footage may be recorded as part of and during my procedure and that these image/s or video/s will assist the doctor to provide appropriate treatment.

On the basis of the above statements, I request to have the procedure.

Name of Patient _____

Signature_____ Date _____

Doctor/Delegate Statement

I have explained to the patient all the above points under the Patient Consent section and I am of the opinion that the patient/substitute decision-maker has understood the information.

Name of Doctor/Delegate_____ Designation_____

Signature_____ Date _____

Interpreter's Statement

I have given a sight translation in_____(patient's language) of the consent form and assisted in the provision of any verbal and written information given to the patient/parent or guardian/substitute decision-maker by the doctor.

Name of Interpreter _____

Signature_____ Date _____