



Education

Cystoscopy

What is a cystoscopy?

This procedure allows your health care provider to examine the inside of your bladder by inserting a small tube called a cystoscope through the urethra. The scope is a thin, flexible, lighted tube with lenses like a microscope.

When is it used?

The test is used for both diagnosis and treatment. Some of the diagnostic uses of cystoscopy are:

- looking for stones or tumors in the bladder
- getting urine samples from the kidneys to look for infection or tumor cells
- examining the bladder lining, parts of the kidneys, or the prostate gland
- doing a biopsy by removing a sample of bladder tissue to check for cancer or other problems.

Treatments that can be performed during cystoscopy include:

- removing bladder tumors
- crushing and removing stones found in the bladder
- removing a blockage in the urinary tract
- treating bleeding in the bladder.

How do I prepare for a cystoscopy?

Follow instructions given to you by your health care provider. If you are to have general anesthesia, eat a light meal, such as soup or salad, the night before the procedure. Do not eat or drink anything after midnight and the morning before the procedure. Do not even drink coffee, tea, or water.

Find someone to drive you home after the procedure.

What happens during the procedure?

You will be given either general or local anesthesia before the procedure to help keep you from feeling pain. Local anesthesia numbs part of your body while you stay awake. General anesthesia relaxes your muscles, puts you to sleep, and prevents you from feeling pain.

Your health care provider will insert the cystoscope inside your urethra and into your bladder. The urethra carries urine from your bladder to outside the body. Your provider will pass water through the tube and into your bladder to stretch the bladder and give a better view. Then your provider will examine your bladder, urethra, and prostate gland (in men).

Your provider will measure how much water your bladder can hold and look for:

- abnormal bladder muscles
 - relaxation of the bladder wall
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- tumors
- inflammation
- constrictions in the urethra.

If you have the procedure with a local anesthetic, you may have some sensation when the scope is passed through the urethra and again when it is removed. You also may feel a coolness when the water fills the bladder. If a biopsy is taken, you may notice a tug or pinching feeling when the tissue is removed.

Cystoscopy usually takes 15 to 45 minutes to complete. The scope is usually in the bladder for no more than 5 to 10 minutes.

What happens after the procedure?

You may go home after the procedure.

It is normal to have the following symptoms for several days:

- frequent urination with some burning after urination
- urine that is red or pink in color with a few stringlike blood clots.

Your provider may prescribe medicine for you to take after the procedure. Ask your provider what other steps you should take and when you should come back for a checkup.

What are the benefits of this procedure?

It may help your health care provider make a better diagnosis and in some cases, cure the problem.

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.
- A local anesthetic may not numb the area quite enough and you may feel some minor discomfort. Also, in rare cases, you may have an allergic reaction to the drug used in this type of anesthesia. Local anesthesia is considered safer than general anesthesia.
- Your bladder could be punctured.
- You may not be able to urinate. If you have a lot of discomfort, you may need to have your bladder drained with a catheter temporarily.
- You may have infection and bleeding.

Precautions, of course, are taken against these risks. You should ask your health care provider how these risks apply to you.

When should I call my health care provider?

Call your provider right away if:

- You develop a fever.
- There is a lot of blood in your urine.
- You are unable to urinate.

Call during office hours if:

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

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