

Preparing for Bronchoscopy

What is bronchoscopy?

Bronchoscopy is a very useful procedure that allows the doctor to look directly at the airways leading to your lungs. A special instrument called a **bronchoscope** is inserted into your mouth or nose, down the windpipe, into the lungs. The type of bronchoscope used most often is a flexible tube with a magnifier and a powerful light. A small channel with the tube allows the doctor to insert tiny instruments.

Bronchoscopy can be used for both diagnosis and treatment. For example, it is used to obtain biopsy specimens and washings, evaluate pneumonia and other lung infections, diagnose tumors, remove foreign objects, and to control bleeding.

How shall I prepare?

Outlined below are some of the steps that are usually required before a bronchoscopy procedure. However, this is meant only as a general guide and you should follow the instructions given by your doctor.

- No food or drink for at least 8 to 10 hours before your procedure
- Your bladder should be empty
- Remove eyeglasses, contact lenses, and dentures
- Tell the doctor if you have any allergies or if you take any medicine. (Bring a list with the names of your medicines and the dosage you take.)
- If you are an outpatient, arrange to have someone drive you home after the procedure and stay with you overnight.

What happens during the procedure?

Bronchoscopy is usually performed by a pulmonary specialist in a hospital or diagnostic laboratory.

- Wearing a hospital gown, you will lie on a table
- Your nasal passage, mouth, and throat may be sprayed with a local anesthetic
- You will receive a sedative, medicine to calm and relax you, through an intravenous tube
- **The bronchoscope will be gently guided into your airway**

How will I feel after the procedure?

When the procedure is completed, you will rest until the sedation and numbness wear off. You should not eat or drink anything until your gag and swallow reflexes return – this usually takes about two hours. Your throat may be a little sore for about a day or two. Complications are rare, but if you have difficulty breathing or cough up blood, call your doctor. Coughing up blood is common, but should still be reported. Above all, follow the specific instructions that will be provided by your doctor before you are discharged.