

Bronchoscopy Testing for Adults

What is a bronchoscopy?

Your doctor has suggested you have a bronchoscopy as part of the evaluation at National Jewish Health. A bronchoscopy allows the doctor to look inside the airways in the lungs. Your doctor may do a lavage, which involves putting a small amount of fluid into the airways. The fluid is then pulled out. The fluid contains cells from the airways of your lungs. A biopsy of the airway may also be done. During a biopsy a small amount of the tissue is taken from the airways, lung or lymph nodes. The cells and tissue can be studied closely to help determine your diagnosis and the best treatment for you.

How do you get ready for the bronchoscopy?

- Do not eat solid food for 8 hours before the procedure.
- Do not drink fluids for 4 hours before the procedure.
- Review your medications with your doctor or nurse to determine which medications are safe to take prior to the procedure.
- If you have diabetes, please bring your glucose meter, test strips, and a source of fast-acting glucose with you (such as glucose tablets or glucose gel).
- If you wear oxygen at home please bring a portable oxygen unit with you. This includes oxygen use when you sleep and/or are active. You may need oxygen for a while after the procedure.
- The medication you receive during the bronchoscopy makes you sleepy. Ask a companion (family member or friend) to pick you up after your procedure and stay with you during the night. You will not be able to drive or take a taxi home after the procedure.

Arrive 1 hour before the bronchoscopy is scheduled to get ready for the procedure.

What is done during the test?

When you arrive the nurse will explain what will be done before, during and after the bronchoscopy. If you have any questions, please ask. The nurse will start an IV. The IV will be used to give medicine to make you sleepy. Right before the bronchoscopy, medicine will be squirted in your nose and throat. This medicine makes the nose and throat numb. You will be given oxygen during and after the bronchoscopy to make sure your body is getting enough oxygen.

During the bronchoscopy a small tube will be placed through the nose or mouth into the lungs. Your doctor can see what the vocal cords and the airways in the lungs look like. A lavage or biopsy may also be done.

Once the bronchoscopy is done you will rest. You will be sleepy in the beginning and your throat may still feel numb. You will be on oxygen in the beginning. When your throat isn't numb you can have something to eat and drink. This often takes at least 1 hour. Your doctor will determine when you are able to go home.

How long will the test take?

Plan on being at National Jewish Health for at least 4 to 6 hours, although sometimes people stay longer. The preparation for the bronchoscopy will take about 1 hour. The bronchoscopy will take from 15 to 90 minutes. The recovery after the bronchoscopy may take from 1 to 3 hours. Sometimes, an overnight stay is required. Again, the medication you receive during the bronchoscopy makes you sleepy so plan to have someone drive you home when you are done.

How do you get to your test?

If you are being seen at National Jewish Health, on the day of your scheduled test, check in at the Front Desk. If you have questions please call 303-398-1355. Also, if you need to cancel the appointment or change the time please call.

Visit our website for more information about support groups, clinical trials and lifestyle information.

PTE.22 © Copyright 2018

NOTE: This information is provided to you as an educational service of National Jewish Health. It is not meant to be a substitute for consulting with your own physician.

National Jewish Health is the leading respiratory hospital in the nation. Founded 119 years ago as a nonprofit hospital, National Jewish Health today is the only facility in the world dedicated exclusively to groundbreaking medical research and treatment of patients with respiratory, cardiac, immune and related disorders. Patients and families come to National Jewish Health from around the world to receive cutting-edge, comprehensive, coordinated care. To learn more, visit njhealth.org.