



Manchester  
Urology

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## **Flexible Cystoscopy**

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**An Information Leaflet** (*Written May 2008*)

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## What is a flexible cystoscopy?

This procedure involves a flexible cystoscope (fibre-optic camera which is flexible enough to be directed around the bladder) being inserted into the bladder via the urethra (tube leading from the bladder which carries urine to the outside of the body). It allows the doctor or specialist nurse to look at the inside of the bladder and urethra in order to check for any abnormalities. A flexible cystoscopy may be performed under a local anaesthetic (numbing gel inserted into the urethra) as an outpatient and takes about 5 to 10 minutes.

Sterile fluid is run through the cystoscope in order to obtain a good view of the bladder and stretch out the folds within its lining. It may be necessary for men to try to pass urine when the cystoscope reaches the sphincter (muscle) within the urethra as this allows the instrument to be passed more easily. No urine will actually come out while the cystoscope is in the urethra, but there may be some stinging for a moment as the sphincter opens.

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## What are the benefits?

The procedure enables views of your bladder to help obtain a diagnosis for symptoms you may have experienced (e.g. pain passing urine or bladder pain, recurrent urinary infections, blood in the urine, changes in the stream as you pass urine) or to check on the condition of your bladder following surgery, or to determine whether or not you have a recurrence of bladder cancer.

A flexible cystoscopy does not require admission to hospital as it is performed under local anaesthetic. The doctor or nurse performing the procedure is able to tell you the results of the examination straight away.

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## Are there any risks involved?

- You may feel some discomfort during the procedure, but it should not be painful.
- *Bleeding.* It is usual to see blood when you pass urine, but this should subside within 2 days.
- *Pain passing urine.* You may notice a mild burning sensation when you pass urine for about 1 to 2 days. Drinking extra fluids should help to reduce this.
- *Frequency and urgency.* You may feel an urgent need to pass urine after the procedure, which is normal and is due to irritation from the insertion of the cystoscope.
- *Infection.* It is normal to have some discomfort on passing urine immediately after the procedure. If this lasts for more than 1 to 2 days or if you feel feverish and/or generally unwell, you may have an infection requiring antibiotics.
- *Injury to the urethra.* Very rarely a stricture (narrowing) may occur due to the formation of scar tissue within the urethra
- Further treatment may be required if an abnormality is found on looking inside the bladder.

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## Before the procedure

Please telephone your local Urology department if you have or have had any of the following, as it may be necessary for you to have antibiotics 1 hour before the procedure can be carried out;

- Heart valve replacement
- Rheumatic fever
- Endocarditis (inflammation of the heart)
- A heart condition for which you have been advised to take antibiotics before procedures (for example dental treatment).

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## What are the alternatives?

A cystoscopy under general anaesthetic (when you are completely asleep) can be performed, but this will require admission to hospital.



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### What happens to me when I arrive at the department?

You will be met by a member of the nursing staff who will explain the procedure to you and ask you to provide a sample of urine. You will be asked some questions to ensure your safety throughout the cystoscopy, and any documentation will be completed. You will be escorted to a changing cubicle, and asked to remove your clothes from the waist down and change into a hospital gown to protect your clothes during the procedure.

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### On the day of the procedure

You may eat, drink and take your usual medication as normal before your appointment.

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### What happens after the procedure?

There will be no need to rest after the flexible cystoscopy and you will be able to drive home.

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### Discharge arrangements

You will be notified of any further follow-up or treatment required before going home and any necessary appointments will be given to you or sent via a letter to your home address.

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### Other treatments or procedures which may be performed at the time of a cystoscopy

#### Urethral dilatation

A urethral dilatation involves slight stretching of the urethra via the insertion of instruments of increasing size. This is done for a narrowed urethra, which may have caused symptoms such as recurrent urine infections, reduced urinary flow or difficulty completely emptying your bladder.

Preparations, recovery time, risks and discharge arrangements are no different from having a flexible cystoscopy only, although it may be necessary for the procedure to be repeated in the future due to recurrence of the narrowed urethra and subsequent symptoms.

#### Ureteric stent removal

A ureteric stent removal involves a 'grabbing' instrument being inserted into the bladder via the cystoscope which then takes hold of the stent (which has usually been left in place following surgery) and pulls it out.

Preparations, length of procedure, risks and discharge arrangements are no different from having a flexible cystoscopy only, although it may be necessary to have an x-ray prior to the stent's removal.

#### Cystodiathermy

This procedure is used to treat recurrent bladder cancer and involves the burning away of tumours present in the bladder.

There may be an increased amount of blood in the urine than if a flexible cystoscopy alone had been performed.

You may also experience slight discomfort as the diathermy treatment is given.

The preparations, risks and discharge arrangements are the same as having a flexible cystoscopy only, although you will require continued monitoring of your bladder cancer. A follow-up appointment for a further cystoscopy will be sent via a letter to your home address.

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### If there is a problem?

If you experience any problems following the procedure, please contact your GP or your local urology department for advice.



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For further information or to arrange an appointment with a consultant, please call: 0800 656 9616

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