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Cystoscopy

Definition

Cystoscopy is a procedure done with a **cystoscope** (a thin, tubular, lighted instrument) to examine the inside of the bladder and **urethra** (channel that carries urine from the body). The cystoscope is inserted through the urethra into the bladder.

A cystoscopy is done to rule out abnormalities. It may be done to:

- Evaluate frequent urinary tract infections, painful urination, or difficulty passing urine.
- Look for cause of **hematuria** (blood in the urine).
- Diagnose and remove small bladder stones. Slender instruments can be inserted through the cystoscope to remove the stones.
- Perform a **biopsy**. A small tissue sample may be removed and examined in the lab.

Risks

Cystoscopy is thought to be a low-risk procedure. However, some patients may experience such problems as:

- Reaction to medication given during the exam.
- Urinary tract infection.
- Extended difficulty with urination or blood in the urine.

Preparation

Follow all instructions from your doctor. Be sure to tell your doctor:

- Any medications you take and/or supplements and vitamins.
- Any allergies to medications.
- If you think you might be pregnant.
- If you have bleeding problems.

Prior to the exam, you may eat and drink normally. You should plan to have someone drive you home after the procedure if your doctor says sedation (relaxed state caused by drugs) or anesthesia (loss of feeling caused by drugs) may be needed during the exam.

Procedure Description

You may be given sedation or anesthesia, or you may be completely awake during the exam and the area around your urethral opening will be numbed with medication. You will lie face up with your knees raised.

As the cystoscope is inserted, a sterile solution flows through the scope. This liquid fills your bladder so your doctor can better see the bladder walls. You may feel some discomfort and the need to urinate.

Using the scope, the doctor visualizes the inside of your bladder on a monitor. If any stones are seen, your doctor may remove them at this time. In some cases, a small tissue sample may be removed.

After Cystoscopy

You must remain at the facility until you are awake and alert, if any sedation or anesthesia was used. If these were not used, you can go home right after the exam.

You may experience discomfort or burning the first time you urinate after the exam. There may be blood in your urine. These symptoms should not last more than 24 hours and are usually relieved by drinking two or more glasses of water each hour, repeating this for several hours after the test. A warm bath or compress held on the urethral opening may help as well.

Some doctors may prescribe medicine to prevent a urinary tract infection after the exam.

Follow-Up Instructions

You should contact your doctor immediately if you experience any of the following symptoms, as they may indicate a urinary tract infection or a more serious condition:

- Blood or blood clots in your urine after you have urinated several times.
- Painful urination or persistent burning during urination.
- Frequent urge to urinate.
- Inability to pass urine or passing only small amounts of urine despite the urge to urinate.
- Foul-smelling urine.
- Lower abdominal pain or pressure, or pain in your side or back.
- Fever or chills.