

Going Home after a Thoracoscopy

Most people are required to stay in between twenty four to forty eight hours. Prior to the drainage tube being removed, you will need a chest x-ray and if this shows that the lung is fully inflated, the drain will be removed and you will be allowed to go home the same day. The effects of the sedation take twenty four hours to fully wear off, so you should be fine by the time you go home.

When will I know the result?

The doctors will be able to tell you what they have performed during the test. However, if tissue is taken for analysis it will be 7-10 days before the results are known and the doctor will organise an appointment to see you to discuss these results.

Your Thoracoscopy Appointment date is on

If there are any problems with this appointment please contact Dr Stewart's secretary on 01634 823837. You can also call this number if you have any concerns with regards to your thoracoscopy

Endoscopy Unit
Sunderland Day Case Centre
Medway NHS Foundation Trust
Windmill Road
Gillingham
Kent ME7 5NY
01634 830000

PIL00001222-3

Date: March 2016

Review Date: March 2018

Sunderland Day Case Centre Endoscopy Unit

Having a Thoracoscopy Information you need to know for your appointment



www.medway.nhs.uk

What is a Thoracoscopy?

A thoracoscopy is a test that allows the doctor to look directly inside your chest cavity so that the lining of the lung and the chest wall, that is the pleura, can be visualised. The doctor does this by passing a thoracoscope through the chest wall. This is done under local anaesthetic and sedation so you should experience very minimal discomfort. By doing this, the doctor can obtain a clear view of the lung and chest wall linings and if necessary, take samples (a biopsy).

What if I am taking any Medication?

It is very important to let your doctor know if you are taking any medication. Usually, your doctor will tell you to continue; however, if you are taking drugs which thin your blood (anti-coagulants like heparin and warfarin or Aspirin), your doctor may tell you to stop taking them four days before your test.

On the day of your Test

You will come to Bronte ward at 12.30pm to be admitted. From there you will go to the Endoscopy unit. You can have a breakfast of toast and cereal, and tea or coffee, no later than 10.00am that morning. Your tablets can be taken at that time. You should not eat or drink anything after 10.00am. After 10.00am you can use an inhaler.

What happens when I arrive?

A doctor or nurse will explain the procedure to you and will ask you to sign a consent form. This is to make sure you understand the test and its complications. If you have any worries or questions, don't be afraid to ask for more information.

Please tell the doctor or nurse if you are allergic to any drugs, and if there has been any change in your condition since you were last seen in clinic. You should give any drugs you are taking to the Ward staff.

What happens during the test?

You will be lying on your side, so that the side of your chest to be investigated will be upper most. Your hands and head will be resting comfortably on a pillow. You will be given an injection into the vein of your hand or arm and this will make you feel drowsy and sleepy during the procedure such that, you may not remember anything about the procedure. Local anaesthetic will be injected into the side of your chest which will make the whole area numb. A small hole less than two centimetres in size will then be made and through this the thoracoscope will be passed in order to view inside the chest. It is sometimes necessary to make a second small hole in the chest to help take biopsies and this will be done in the same way. Any fluid that is inside the chest cavity will be sucked out. After the biopsy samples have been taken, some powder called talc will be blown into the chest through one of the small holes—this is to help the lungs stick up against the chest wall and prevent the fluid coming back.

Are there any risks?

Thoracoscopy is normally well tolerated even in breathless people with lung disease. Complications are rare. There is a small risk of over-sedation which is easily corrected. Biopsies can sometimes cause bleeding and there can occasionally be some bleeding around the site of entry into the chest. Occasionally, infection can occur in the chest and so to prevent this, you will be given a dose of antibiotics just prior to the procedure.

After the Test

A small plastic drainage tube will be left in one of the holes in your chest wall and connected to a bottle to let out any residual fluid or air. You will be transferred to the chest ward and some suction may be needed to be connected to your drainage bottle to help the lung become fully inflated.