

Urology department

Examination of the bladder under local anaesthetic (flexible cystoscopy)

This information tells you about what happens when you come for a flexible cystoscopy (examination of the bladder) under a local anaesthetic. It explains what is involved and the benefits and risks. It may make you think of things you would like to discuss with your doctor/s.

The bladder

The bladder is a hollow muscular organ which lies in the pelvic space behind the pubic bone. It has two main functions: to store urine and to empty urine from the body from time to time.

What is a cystoscopy?

A cystoscopy is an examination that allows the doctor to directly inspect both the water passage and bladder. The instrument used is called a cystoscopy which is a telescope using a fibre optic light source. The examination itself usually takes 5 to 10 minutes.

Why is a cystoscopy necessary?

Cystoscopy is carried out for a number of reasons:

- you may have blood in your urine
- difficulty or pain on passing urine
- frequency or urgency on passing urine
- recurrent urine infections
- regular checks for bladder cancer

A flexible cystoscope can also be used to remove ureteric stents.

Is there any preparation for the procedure?

- No special preparation is needed - you can eat and drink as normal.
- You will come to the integrated procedures unit (IPU) for the flexible cystoscopy and leave when the procedure is completed and the nurses are happy for you to go.
- There is no need to rest afterwards. You may drive home.

Agreeing to treatment: consent

Your doctor will have explained the procedure and the reasons for it. We will ask you to sign a consent form agreeing to accept the treatment that you are being offered. The basis of the agreement is that you have had The Christie's written description of the proposed treatment and that you have been given an opportunity to discuss any concerns. You are entitled to request a second opinion from another doctor who specialises in treating this cancer. You can ask your own consultant or your GP to refer you. Your



consent may be withdrawn at any time before or during this treatment. Should you decide to withdraw your consent then a member of your treating team will discuss the possible consequences with you.

Are there any risks of complications?

Very rarely, there is a risk of perforating the bladder. There is also a risk of developing a urine infection.

What is the benefit of a flexible cystoscopy?

The benefit of this procedure is that it allows the doctor to fully assess your bladder.

Are there any alternatives to a flexible cystoscopy?

No, there are no alternatives to this procedure.

What happens if I decide not to have a flexible cystoscopy?

If you decide that you do not want to have this procedure then you need to discuss this with your consultant.

What happens during the procedure?

- The procedure is carried out on the integrated procedures unit (IPU). The staff will greet you when you arrive.
- You will be asked to empty your bladder. The nurse will give you a container if a specimen of urine is needed. After this, the nurse will show you to a cubicle and ask you to change into a hospital gown (to stop your clothes getting wet during the procedure). The nurse will ask you some questions and explain the procedure.
- When you are lying down on a special couch, the doctor will clean your genital area with mild antiseptic and cover the surrounding area with a sterile paper sheet. You will be awake during the procedure.
- The doctor prepares your water passage with a lubricating gel containing a local anaesthetic. This may sting a little at first. Only the flexible part of the cystoscope goes into the bladder.
- The doctor will gently pass the end of the cystoscope into the water passage. This should not be painful but you may feel a little discomfort.
- Men may be asked to breathe in or try to pass urine when the instrument reaches the sphincter (muscle) below the prostate gland. This allows the muscles to relax and the flexible cystoscope to pass in more easily. There may be momentary stinging as the sphincter opens.
- When the bladder is empty there are folds in the lining. Saline is run into the bladder through the cystoscope to stretch out these folds and fill the bladder. This will give you the sensation of wanting to pass urine. Do not worry, urine will not come out whilst the instrument is in the bladder.
- A nurse will stay with you throughout the procedure.
- At the end of the procedure it is usual to pass urine.
- Occasionally, the doctor may need to take a small piece of bladder tissue (biopsy). This is sometimes done through the flexible cystoscope. If the doctor considers it is better to do this whilst you are asleep, we will send for you at a later date.

What are the after effects of the procedure?

Most people have no problems after this procedure but you may experience some of the following effects.

- Mild burning on passing urine and increase frequency of passing urine can occur, but this usually subsides within 24 to 48 hours. We recommend that you drink extra fluids during this time. You can also take mild painkillers such as paracetamol if necessary.
- Mild bleeding when you pass urine. Again drinking extra fluid is recommended and is usually all that is required.
- If you develop a temperature, pain, persistent burning or bleeding contact your GP. You may need a short course of antibiotics.

If you have any questions after reading this leaflet, please do not hesitate to ask your nurse or doctor.

If you have any concerns or worries when you are at home after your cystoscopy contact The Christie Hotline on 0161 446 3658.

Follow-up after your cystoscopy

It may be necessary to see you again at a follow-up appointment following your cystoscopy. We will make an appointment for you when you are discharged home of post one to you.

Further information is available from the following:

The Christie cancer information centres have information on all types of cancer and support:

The Christie at Withington	0161 446 8100
The Christie at Oldham	0161 918 7745
The Christie at Salford	0161 918 7804

Macmillan Cancer Support

For information booklets and for advice from specialist nurses, freephone **0808 808 0000**.

www.macmillan.org.uk

Cancer Research UK

www.cancerresearchuk.org

Provides facts about cancer including treatment choices.

Information from specialist nurses via freephone **0808 800 4040**.

If you need information in a different format, such as easy read, large print, BSL, braille, email, SMS text or other communication support, please tell your ward or clinic nurse.

We try to ensure that all our information given to patients is accurate, balanced and based on the most up-to-date scientific evidence. If you would like to have details about the sources used please contact patient.information@christie.nhs.uk

For information and advice visit the cancer information centres at Withington, Oldham or Salford. Opening times can vary, please check before making a special journey.

Contact The Christie Hotline for
urgent support and specialist advice
The Christie Hotline: 0161 446 3658
Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

