

---

## Having a cystoscopy

---

**Day Surgery Unit  
Chelsea**

**Patient Information**



## Introduction

Your doctor has recommended that you have a cystoscopy. This is a procedure which allows your doctor to look directly at the lining of your bladder. Cystoscopy may be used to help make a diagnosis or for the treatment of some bladder problems. It can also be used for the insertion or removal of a ureteric stent, to relieve a blockage of the ureter. Your doctor will have discussed with you any alternatives to this procedure.

## What is a cystoscopy?

A cystoscopy is a procedure where an endoscope (fine tube containing a telescope) is passed into your bladder through your urethra (the passage that drains urine from your bladder to the outside of your body). The doctor may take a biopsy (small sample of tissue). This is removed painlessly through the endoscope, using tiny biopsy forceps.

## What preparation do I need for my cystoscopy?

Cystoscopy is carried out under general anaesthetic. You can find instructions about when to stop eating and drinking before your cystoscopy in The Royal Marsden leaflet *Having a general anaesthetic and operation*. This leaflet also includes other important information about preparing for a general anaesthetic. It is important that you follow the instructions carefully to ensure your comfort and safety.

## What will happen?

The procedure is carried out in theatre. We will ask you to change into a gown and lie on a trolley. Once the anaesthetic has taken effect, the doctor will pass the endoscope into your bladder. This will allow the doctor to look directly at the lining of your urethra and bladder through the telescope.

Sometimes biopsies of the bladder lining are taken, and any small abnormalities can be cauterised (burnt off) if necessary. Any biopsies which may be taken will be sent to the laboratory to be looked at under the microscope.

## What are the risks?

- There is a very small risk of damage to your bladder or your urethra during this procedure. An operation may be necessary to repair damage.
- There is a small risk of having a urine infection following this procedure.

## What happens afterwards?

- You will probably experience mild discomfort and will need to pass urine more often for a day or two after your cystoscopy.
- There may be some blood in your urine, turning it a pinkish colour. This is normal. Drinking extra fluids (more than two litres of water each day) for a few days can help to relieve this, and will also help to reduce the risk of infection.

- After 7–10 days you may pass a clot of blood in your urine – this is normal. If bleeding or clots continue then seek advice.

Occasionally, if the doctor needs to take a slightly larger biopsy you may need to stay in hospital for a few days. If this is necessary, a catheter (soft narrow tube) will be inserted into your bladder to drain your urine. Your bladder may also be flushed with salt water to prevent the collection of any blood clots.

## **When should I contact the hospital?**

You should seek advice if:

- Your urine is very bloodstained with clots
- You feel pain or discomfort when passing urine for more than the first 48 hours after your cystoscopy, or notice your urine smells offensive.
- You may have a urinary tract infection and need some antibiotics.

## Contact details

**If you have any questions about this procedure, please contact:**

Day Surgery Unit –  
between 8am–6pm: **020 7808 2384**  
or

After 6pm you should call your own  
general practitioner.

Alternatively, please contact:

**The Royal Marsden Macmillan  
Hotline: 020 8915 6899**

(available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

Should you require information in an  
alternative format, please contact The  
Royal Marsden Help Centre.

## References

This booklet is evidence based wherever the appropriate evidence is available, and represents an accumulation of expert opinion and professional interpretation.

Details of the references used in writing this booklet are available on request from:

The Royal Marsden Help Centre

Freephone: 0800 783 7176

Email: [patientcentre@rmh.nhs.uk](mailto:patientcentre@rmh.nhs.uk)

No conflicts of interest were declared in the production of this booklet.

The patient information service is generously supported by The Royal Marsden Charity.

[royalmarsden.org](http://royalmarsden.org)

Registered Charity No.1095197



Revised April 2022. Planned Review April 2025  
© The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust SD-0308-09



Radiotherapy and  
Chemotherapy Services  
F538021 & F538022

