

# Overview

## Cystoscopy

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A cystoscopy is a procedure to look inside the bladder using a thin camera called a cystoscope.

A cystoscope is inserted into the urethra (the tube that carries pee out of the body). It is then passed into the bladder to allow a doctor or nurse to see inside.

Small surgical instruments can also be passed down the cystoscope. These are used to treat some bladder problems at the same time.

## Types of cystoscopy

There are 2 types of cystoscopy:

- flexible cystoscopy – a thin (about the width of a pencil), bendy cystoscope is used. You stay awake while it's carried out
- rigid cystoscopy – a slightly wider cystoscope that doesn't bend is used. You're either put to sleep or the lower half of your body is numbed while it's carried out

Flexible cystoscopies tend to be done if the procedure is just to look inside your bladder.

A rigid cystoscopy may be done if you need treatment for a particular problem in your bladder.

Men and women can have either type of cystoscopy. Ask your doctor or nurse which type you're going to have if you're not sure.

## Why cystoscopies are used

A cystoscopy can be used to look for and treat problems in the bladder or urethra.

It can be used to check for the cause of problems such as:

- blood in pee

- frequent urinary tract infections (UTIs)
- problems peeing
- long-lasting pelvic pain

A cystoscopy can be used to carry out treatments such as:

- removing small bladder stones
- inserting or removing a stent (a small tube used to treat blockages)
- injecting medication into the bladder
- remove a sample of tissue for testing in a laboratory (a biopsy) to check for problems such as bladder cancer

## Having a cystoscopy

A cystoscopy can be a bit uncomfortable, but it's not usually painful.

For a flexible cystoscopy, local anaesthetic gel is used to numb the urethra. This will reduce any discomfort when the cystoscope is inserted.

A rigid cystoscopy is carried out under general anaesthetic (where you're asleep) or a spinal anaesthetic (which numbs the lower half of your body). Having an anaesthetic means you will not have any pain while it's carried out.

It's normal to have some discomfort when peeing after a cystoscopy, but this should pass in a few days.

## Recovering from a cystoscopy

You should be able to get back to normal quite quickly after a cystoscopy.

You can usually leave hospital the same day and can return to your normal activities as soon as you feel able to. This may be later the same day if you had a flexible cystoscopy, or a couple of days after a rigid cystoscopy.

It's normal to have discomfort when peeing and some blood in your pee for a day or two.

### See your GP if

you have any of the following:

- severe discomfort or discomfort that does not improve in a few days
- a [high temperature \(fever\)](#) of 38 degrees Celsius or above

**Go to your nearest emergency department (ED) if:**

- you feel really unwell

## Risks of a cystoscopy

A cystoscopy is usually a very safe procedure and serious complications are rare.

The main risks are:

- a urinary tract infection (UTI) – which may need to be treated with antibiotics
- being unable to pee after going home – which may mean a thin tube called a catheter needs to be temporarily inserted into your bladder so you can empty your bladder

There's also a risk your bladder could be damaged by the cystoscope, but this is rare.

Speak to your doctor or nurse about the possible risks of the procedure before having it.

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