

TESTfacts

An Educational Health Series From National Jewish Health®



Bronchoscopy Testing

What is a bronchoscopy?

Your doctor has suggested you/your child have a bronchoscopy as part of the evaluation at National Jewish. A bronchoscopy allows the doctor to look inside the airways in the lungs. The bronchoscopy can be videotaped to look at later. Your doctor may also do a lavage, which involves putting a small amount of fluid into the airways. The fluid is then pulled out. The fluid contains cells from the airways of your lungs. A biopsy of the airway may also be done. During a biopsy a small amount of the tissue is taken from the lining of the lung. The cells and tissue can be studied closely to help determine your diagnosis and the best treatment for you/your child.

How do you get ready for the test?

- Adults - Do not eat food or drink liquids for at least 6 to 8 hours before the test.
- Children - Do not eat food or drink liquids for at least 6 to 8 hours before the test.
- The medication you receive during the bronchoscopy makes you sleepy. Adults - Ask a companion (family member or friend) to pick you up after your procedure and stay with you during the night. You will not be able to drive or take a taxi home after the test.
- If you wear oxygen at home please bring a portable oxygen unit with you. This includes oxygen use when you sleep and/or are active. You may need oxygen for awhile after the procedure.
- If you are diabetic, please bring your glucose meter, test strips, and a source of fast-acting glucose with you (such as glucose tablets or glucose gel).

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Arrive 1 hour before the bronchoscopy is scheduled to get ready for the bronchoscopy.

Do take your inhaled medicines as you normally do.

- Adults - Take your oral medicines with a small sip of water.
- Children – Ask your child’s doctor if you should give oral medicines with a small sip of water or not.

Children - Bring a favorite blanket or toy if this would be comforting for your child.

What is done during the test?

When you arrive the nurse will explain what will be done before, during and after the bronchoscopy. If you have any questions, please ask. The nurse will start an IV. The IV will be used to give medicine to make you/your child sleepy. Right before the bronchoscopy, medicine will be squirted in your/your child’s nose and throat. This medicine makes the nose and throat numb. You/your child will be given oxygen during and after the bronchoscopy to make sure your body is getting enough oxygen.

During the bronchoscopy a small tube will be placed through the nose into the lungs. Your doctor can see what the vocal cords and the airways in the lungs look like. A lavage or biopsy may also be done.

Once the bronchoscopy is done you/your child will rest. You/your child will be sleepy in the beginning and your throat may still feel numb. You will be on oxygen in the beginning. When your throat isn’t numb you/your child can have something to eat and drink. This often takes at least 1 hour. Your doctor will determine when you are able to go home.

How long will the test take?

Plan on being at National Jewish Health for at least 4 to 6 hours, although sometimes people stay longer. The preparation for the bronchoscopy will take about 1 hour. The bronchoscopy will take from 15 to 45 minutes. The recovery after the bronchoscopy may take from 1 to 3 hours. Sometimes, an overnight stay is required. Again, the medication you receive during the bronchoscopy makes you sleepy so plan to have someone drive you home when you are done.

How do you get to your test?

On the day of your scheduled test, check in at the Front Desk. If you have questions please call 303-398-1355. Also, if you need to cancel the appointment or change the time please call.