

What is a cystoscopy?

When you have a urinary problem, your doctor may want to use a cystoscope to see inside your bladder and urethra. The urethra is the tube that carries urine from the bladder to the outside of the body.

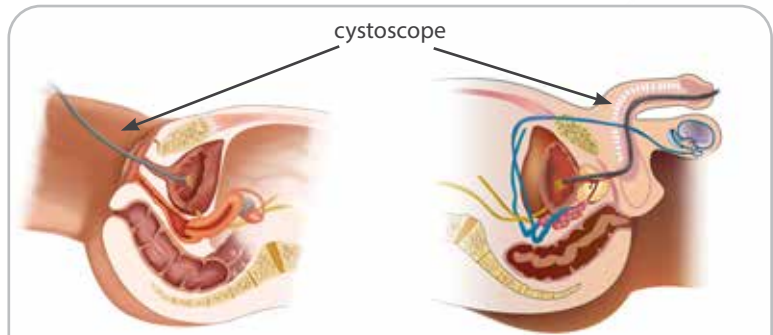
The cystoscope has lenses like a telescope that let doctors see the inside of the urinary tract. The cystoscope is as thin as a pencil and has a light at the tip. Cystoscopy can use extra tubes to guide other instruments into the area if necessary. Your doctor may recommend cystoscopy if you have had any or a combination of the following:

- Frequent urinary tract infections
- Blood in your urine
- Loss of bladder control
- Need for a bladder catheter
- Painful urination
- Chronic pelvic pain
- Urinary blockage such as prostate enlargement
- Stones
- Unusual growths such as polyps, tumors or cancer

Preparing for Your Procedure

Usually there are no special instructions prior to cystoscopy. You can eat and drink normally before and after the test. You might be asked to give a urine sample to check for infection, so try to avoid urinating for an hour before the test.

You will need to get undressed. The lower part of your body will be covered with a drape. Most of the time, you'll lie on your back with your knees raised and apart. A nurse or technician will clean the area around the urethra (the opening where the urine leaves the body) and may apply a local anesthetic.



What to Expect

The doctor will gently insert the tip of the cystoscope into your urethra and slowly guide it up into the bladder. Relaxing the pelvic muscles will make the test easier. Sterile water or saline will flow through the cystoscope to slowly fill your bladder, stretching it to allow your doctor a better view. As your bladder fills, you may feel some discomfort, as well as the need to urinate. You will be able to empty your bladder as soon as the exam is over.

After Your Procedure

You might have a mild burning sensation when you urinate and may see small amounts of blood in the urine. This should not last more than 24 hours. Tell your doctor if bleeding or pain is severe, or if these problems last more than a couple days.

Drink two 8-ounce glasses of water per hour for two hours. Ask your doctor if you can take a warm bath to relieve the burning. If not, you may be able to hold a warm, damp cloth over the urethral opening.

Your doctor may give you an antibiotic for a day or two to prevent infection. If you have signs of an infection, including pain, chills or fever, tell your doctor.

Information courtesy of the National Kidney and Urologic Diseases Information Clearinghouse

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