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CYSTOSCOPY 101

Cystoscopy: a procedure to see inside the bladder and urethra using a telescope to:

- Check for cancer of the bladder or urethra
- Diagnose and evaluate urinary tract disorders
- Diagnose repeated bladder infections
- Help determine the cause of pain during urination

How the test works: A cystoscopy is performed with a flexible cystoscope, a special tube with a small camera on the end and usually takes between 5 and 20 minutes. The urethra is cleansed and the scope is then inserted through the urethra into the bladder. Saline water flows through the cystoscope to fill the bladder, stretching the bladder wall. This allows your healthcare provider to see the entire bladder wall. You will feel the need to urinate when the bladder is full, however, the bladder must remain full until the exam is completed. If any tissue appears abnormal, a small sample (biopsy) can be taken through the cystoscope to be tested in the lab.

How the test feels: You may feel slight discomfort when the cystoscope is passed through the urethra into the bladder. You will feel an uncomfortable, strong need to urinate when your bladder is full. If a biopsy is taken, you may feel a quick pinch. After the cystoscope is removed, the urethra may be sore. You may have blood in the urine and a burning sensation during urination for a day or two following the procedure.

Normal Results: The bladder wall should look smooth. The bladder should be a normal size, shape and position. There should be no blockages, growths, or stones.

Abnormal Results May Include: Bladder stones (calculi), chronic urethritis, bladder wall decompression, congenital abnormality, cysts, diverticula, irritable bladder, polyps, prostate problems such as enlarged, bleeding or obstructed prostate, traumatic injury of the bladder and urethra, tumor, ulcer or urethral strictures.

Risks: There is a slight risk of excess bleeding when a biopsy is taken. Other risks may include bladder infection or rupture of the bladder wall.

Considerations: Drink 4 – 6 glasses of water per day after your cystoscopy. You may notice a small amount of blood in your urine after this procedure. If the bleeding continues after you urinate or you experience chills, fever, pain or reduced urine output, please contact your healthcare provider.