After the bronchoscopy

• If the patient has a breathing tube, his/her breathing may be easier after the procedure.
• If the patient was on a breathing machine before the procedure, it will be needed after the bronchoscopy. He/she may have an oxygen mask in place.
• The medication given during the procedure may make the patient sleepy.

If you have any concerns, please talk them over with the doctors and or nurses. They are here to help you.

Risks

• Lung damage
• Slow heart rate
• Infection
• Bleeding
• Damage to the trachea
Bronchoscopy – Intensive Care Unit

We have arranged for your family member to have a bronchoscopy. This pamphlet will help you learn about the test.

What is a bronchoscopy?
The specialist uses a scope with a light at the tip to look at the inside of the windpipe (trachea) and the smaller breathing tubes (bronchi) of the lungs. In the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), the patient often has an artificial breathing tube (endotracheal tube or tracheostomy) through which the scope is passed.

Why is it done?
It may be done:
• to find out what is causing the problem. The doctor will discuss this with you.
• to obtain a sample of tissue, cells, or sputum for examination.
• to remove secretions that can not be cleared with coughing or routine suctioning.
• to check on an abnormal chest X-ray.
• to remove a foreign object.

How does the patient get ready for the test?
• The patient or family will be asked to sign a consent form. The physician will explain why the procedure is needed and how it is done.
• The patient will not be able to eat or drink before the test.
• The patient will be given a medication to help him/her relax shortly before the test.

Where is the test done?
It may be done in:
• the Operating Room
• the ICU

How is the test done?
• An intravenous is in place to give medication.
• The patient is placed on his/her back.
• In the ICU, the patient usually has a breathing tube and the procedure is done through this tube. If on a breathing machine, it will be removed for a short period of time and the Respiratory Therapist will assist with breathing.
• If the patient does not have a breathing tube:
  - Oxygen is given by mask or nasal prongs.
  - An anesthetic may be sprayed into the nose and the back of the throat to numb the nerves.
  - He/she will be asked to breathe through the nose and to relax.
  - The scope enters the mouth or nose and passes down into the windpipe.
• A small channel in the bronchoscope is used to take specimens if needed.

How long will the bronchoscopy take?
It will take about 30 minutes.
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