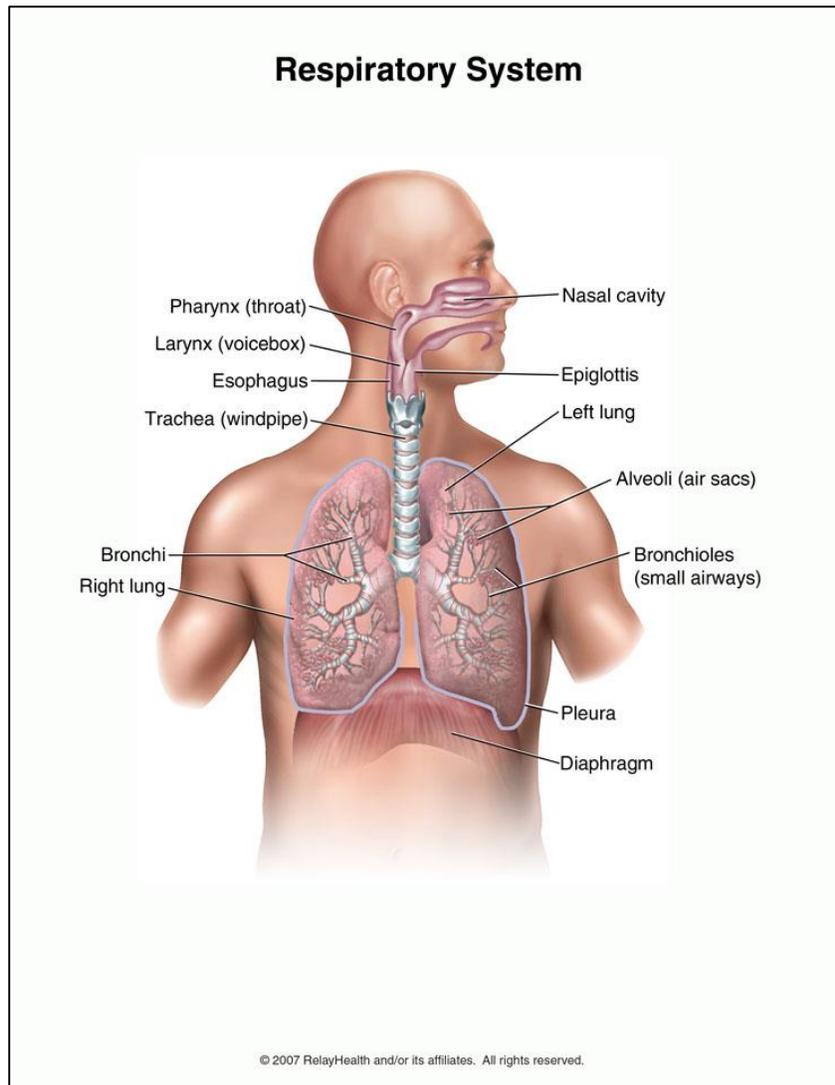


Bronchoscopy

What is a bronchoscopy?

When you have a bronchoscopy, a thin, flexible, lighted tube called a bronchoscope is passed through your mouth and down into your lungs to examine the airways to your lungs. Sometimes one or more pieces of tissue are removed to help make a diagnosis (a biopsy).



When is it used?

This test may be done because:

- You have an irritation, growth, or scar tissue in part of your lungs or the airways to the lungs.
- You may have been born with a deformity in the lungs.
- There may be a foreign body, such as a peanut or coin, in your lungs.
- You may need your airways checked for signs of cancer.
- You are coughing up blood.
- You need to have cultures taken to diagnose an infection.
- You need to have a small sample of lung tissue (biopsy) taken for lab tests.

How do I prepare for a bronchoscopy?

Plan for your care and recovery after the test, especially if you are to have general anesthesia. Find someone to drive you home afterward. Allow for time to rest and try to find other people to help you with your day-to-day tasks the day of the test.

Follow your healthcare provider's instructions about not smoking before and after the test. If you have a biopsy and are a smoker, you will heal more slowly after the test. You are also more likely to have breathing problems during the test. For these reasons, if you are a smoker, you should quit at least 2 weeks before the test. It is best to quit 6 to 8 weeks before the test.

Follow any other instructions your provider gives you. Eat a light meal, such as soup or salad, the night before the test. Do not eat or drink anything after midnight or the morning before the test. Do not even drink any coffee, tea, or water. Do not swallow water when you brush your teeth.

What happens during the test?

You are given a local or general anesthetic. A local anesthetic may be sprayed into your nose and mouth to prevent gagging when the tube is passed through your mouth. If you have a local anesthetic, you may also be given a sedative to relax you. A general anesthetic relaxes your muscles, puts you to sleep, and prevents you from feeling pain.

Your healthcare provider will pass the scope into your nose or mouth and into the throat, down the windpipe, and into the lungs. If your provider finds cancer cells, growths, sores, or other unhealthy tissue, he or she may remove the abnormal tissue or take a sample. If a foreign body is found, it is usually removed.

What happens after the test?

You may go home soon after the test or stay in the hospital for several hours or overnight, depending on what was done and your condition after the test. You will feel some soreness in your throat or neck. The soreness may last a few days after the test. You may be hoarse or have a cough. Lozenges or soothing gargles may be helpful.

Ask your healthcare provider what else you should do to be comfortable at home. Ask when you will be able to get the results of the test and when you should come back for a checkup.

What are the benefits of this test?

This test will help your healthcare provider diagnose and treat your breathing problems. It may relieve your symptoms if you had a foreign body in your airway.

What are the risks associated with this test?

- There are some risks when you have general anesthesia. Discuss these risks with your healthcare provider.
- Rarely, some of your teeth may be chipped as the tube is passed in and out of your mouth.
- Your jaw may be sore.
- Your throat may be swollen.
- You may have infection and bleeding.

Ask your healthcare provider how these risks apply to you.

When should I call my healthcare provider?

Call your provider right away if:

- You have shortness of breath or trouble breathing.
- You are coughing up blood.
- You have new or increased wheezing.
- You develop a fever.

Call during office hours if:

- You have questions about the test or any results.
- You want to make another appointment.

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This content is reviewed periodically and is subject to change as new health information becomes available. The information is intended to inform and educate and is not a replacement for medical evaluation, advice, diagnosis or treatment by a healthcare professional.

[References](#)

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