

Thoracoscopy Information

Your doctor has scheduled you for a thoracoscopy. Thoracoscopy is the insertion of a camera, a through a very small incision (cut) in the chest wall.

Thoracoscopy makes it possible for a physician to examine the lungs or other structures in the chest cavity, without making a large incision. It is an alternative to thoracotomy (opening the chest cavity with a larger incision). The procedure is done to:

- determine the cause of fluid in the chest cavity
- prevent the re-accumulation of fluid in the chest cavity

Preparation and Risks

Prior to thoracoscopy, the patient will have several routine tests, including blood work and a chest X-ray or CT scan. Patients older than 50 must have an electrocardiogram (EKG). The patient should not eat or drink from midnight the night before the thoracoscopy. You will receive IV (intravenous) sedation and local anesthesia to make you comfortable during the procedure.

The risks of thoracoscopy are relatively small and include bleeding, infection, fever, chest discomfort, and injury to the lung or other organ. Several precautions are used to minimize these risks including the use of ultrasound as well as antibiotics prior to the procedure. If you are taking blood thinners such as Coumadin, Lovenox or Heparin please check with your doctor about stopping these prior to the procedure. Otherwise you should take essential medications with a sip of water a couple of hours before you arrive at the hospital.

What to expect after the procedure

After the procedure, you will have a chest x-ray and be admitted to the hospital. A chest tube will remain in for several days to drain the remaining fluid from the chest cavity. Hospital stays typically range from three to five days. Medications for pain are given as needed. After returning home, patients should do only light lifting for several weeks. You will be given detailed instructions upon discharge from you doctor.

Where to go and when to arrive

You need to **arrive 60 minutes before your thoracoscopy is scheduled**. Please come to the 4th floor of the Blalock Building in the Johns Hopkins Hospital to register. After you register, a nurse will bring you back into the prep/recovery room to ask you some questions about your medical history, current medications, and allergies. You will then have an IV placed in order to give you medications for sedation as described above.

We hope the information contained in this pamphlet will help to answer your questions and lessen any apprehension you may have regarding your thoracoscopy.

Things to Remember:

- Nothing to eat or drink after midnight
- Bring a list of your medications with you
- Arrive 60 minutes prior to your scheduled appointment time
- Be prepared to stay in the hospital for 3-5 days

Your procedure is on BLALOCK 4 (Meyerhoff Center) of Johns Hopkins Hospital.

DATE-_____

ARRIVE AT-_____

PROCEDURE scheduled to start at-_____

If you have any further questions please

-call Laura at The Interventional Pulmonology office: 410-502-2533 or

-page Dr. Feller-Kopman (410-283-1077) or Dr. Lonny Yarmus (410-283-3219)

(at the beep, type in your callback number, followed by #)