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FACTSHEET

CYSTOSCOPY

About the Procedure:

Cystoscopy is a diagnostic procedure during which you bladder and urethra are examined with an instrument called a cystoscope. The instrument has a light and a fiber optic lens, and allows your doctor to directly view the lower part of your urinary tract. The cystoscopic exam is one of the most commonly performed urological procedures. It is brief, very safe, and simple and provides the doctor with immediate, valuable diagnostic information.

Preparing for the Procedure:

The best way to prepare for your cystoscopy is to RELAX. For most of us, the thought of an instrument, even a small one, being placed into the urethra is naturally somewhat frightening. However, with the use of a local anesthetic, most patients experience only mild discomfort. When other procedures, such as biopsies, are performed through the cystoscope, an intravenous sedative may also be needed. Your cystoscopy may be performed either in a hospital or an outpatient facility. As we said, it's best to not be too concerned about the procedure. RELAX - and you'll probably find that you worried needlessly. Just before the procedure, you'll be asked to empty your bladder. A urine sample may be obtained. You'll then be asked to remove your clothing, and you will be given a gown or drape to use.

Men undergo cystoscopy either lying on their back, or with their legs in stirrups, depending on the type of cystoscope being used. Women will have their legs in stirrups, similar to the gynecologist's office. Once you are comfortable in the exam table, a betadine solution will be used to cleanse the genital area. Then, xylocaine jelly will be applied as a local anesthetic.

The procedure itself takes no more than 3 or 4 minutes. Once the cystoscope is inserted, your bladder will be filled with sterile irrigating fluid, allowing the doctor to distend your bladder and see the walls more clearly. As the bladder fills, it is normal to start to feel the urge to urinate. Tell the doctor when this occurs.

During the Procedure:

Another test sometimes done with a cystoscopy is called a cystometrogram. This test is done when the doctor suspects a possible problem with the nerve or muscle function of the bladder. It is particularly important in evaluating the patient with incontinence. A cystometrogram is performed by placing a soft rubber catheter into the bladder and draining out the urine. Through the catheter, the bladder is filled with either water or carbon dioxide gas. As the bladder fills, the doctor will be able to evaluate the muscle strength and nerve function of the bladder.

After the Procedure:

You may experience temporary burning and possibly a small amount of blood in the urine. Don't be alarmed - these will usually clear within 24 hours. If you develop fever, chills, or heavy bleeding, notify your doctor immediately.