

# Cystoscopy

## What to expect



# Medical Information Guide

## Cystoscopy

This guide provides information for Medibank Private members and their families about cystoscopy.

It is important that you are well prepared for your healthcare experience, and know what to expect at key stages prior to, during and following this procedure.

It is also important that you discuss your particular circumstances in detail with the healthcare professionals who will be treating and caring for you. You should be confident in the treatment choices you make with your healthcare team and ensure that they are aware of your individual needs.

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Call us on 13 23 31 before you go to hospital to find out what you're covered for, any likely additional costs you may have to pay as well as for any other advice you may need.

The information provided in this guide is current at the time of issue, July 2008.

## What is a cystoscopy?

A cystoscopy is a procedure which enables a specialist doctor to see inside your bladder and urethra (the tube through which urine travels out of the body). The specialist uses a cystoscope, a flexible tube like instrument which can be viewed using a telescope or on a television monitor.

## Why is a cystoscopy performed?

A cystoscopy is used for both diagnosis and treatment.

The procedure allows the doctor to take tissue samples for pathology testing and x-rays of the kidneys.

Diagnosis can be made for patients who experience symptoms including:

- recurrent infection
- pain
- blood stained urine
- difficult or frequent urination
- incontinence

A cystoscopy may also be used to assess symptoms of an enlarged prostate gland.

Treatments which can be performed during cystoscopy include:

- removing bladder tumours
- crushing and removing stones found in the bladder
- removing an obstruction in the urinary tract
- treating bleeding in the bladder

## Referral to a specialist

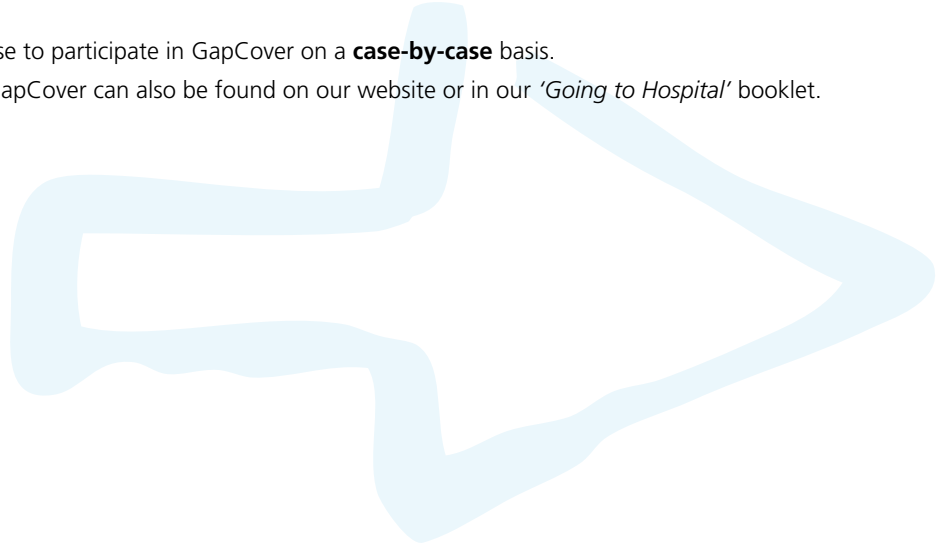
Cystoscopy is a specialised procedure usually performed by a urologist. Your GP can recommend and refer you to a suitable specialist.

As well as advice from your GP, you may wish to know more about the procedure and what you can expect from your specialist. The following website provides further information about cystoscopy: **[www.urosoc.org.au](http://www.urosoc.org.au)**  
Urological Society of Australia

Cost of treatment may also be an important consideration when selecting a specialist. A list of urologists who have participated in Medibank Private's GapCover Scheme in the past can be found on our website **[medibank.com.au](http://medibank.com.au)**

Note: Specialists can choose to participate in GapCover on a **case-by-case** basis.

More information about GapCover can also be found on our website or in our *'Going to Hospital'* booklet.



## What should I discuss with my doctor or specialist?

- discuss the treatment options for your condition and why cystoscopy is being recommended
- what are the possible outcomes for each of the options you have discussed
- what is the likelihood of each of these outcomes occurring
- why your doctor has recommended a particular specialist in your case
- what experience does the specialist have, for example number of cystoscopies performed and outcomes for patients, including complication rates
- possible risks and outcomes associated with the procedure
- when any pathology results will be known
- typical recovery time
- arrangements for getting home and after care
- possible further treatment

Ideally, you should make sure that you fully understand the procedure that is going to be performed. Your specialist should explain in detail how the cystoscopy is done, and what preparation you should make. Your doctor may provide you with written material to read at home.

Your Medibank Private *'Going to Hospital'* booklet contains further questions that you may wish to ask your doctor, including information on obtaining informed financial consent.

## Where is it done?

A cystoscopy is performed in either a day surgery or hospital.

## How long will it take?

Time required for the procedure will vary with individual circumstances and can take anywhere from five to 45 minutes. Recovery time following the procedure can also vary enormously depending on the clinical situation, for example a couple of hours to days.

## Who is involved?

Healthcare professionals usually involved in the procedure are:

- your urologist
- an anaesthetist will administer the anaesthetic and remain with you throughout the procedure. A cystoscopy can be performed under local, spinal or general anaesthetic
- a pathologist may also be involved for tests
- specialised nurses will assist with the procedure and your recovery

## How to prepare

Your specialist should provide detailed advice on the preparation required in your particular case, but in general:

- if you are having a rigid cystoscopy you will need to fast (have nothing to eat or drink) for six hours prior to the procedure. If you are having a flexible cystoscopy, fasting is not required
- you should obtain medical advice about taking prescribed medications prior to the procedure

## What happens on arrival at the day surgery or hospital?

When you arrive at the day surgery or hospital, you will be admitted. Necessary paperwork will need to be completed.

Prior to the procedure your specialist will ask you to sign a consent form, indicating that you give him or her permission to perform the procedure and that you understand all potential risks and complications.

## What to expect during a cystoscopy

Following admission, you will be taken to the procedure room and prepared for the cystoscopy. An anaesthetist may see you during this time. An intravenous drip may be started prior to you being taken to theatre.

The type of cystoscopy used will depend on the condition being assessed or treated.

A **rigid cystoscopy** allows for biopsy or removal of lesion at the time of the procedure, and is carried out under either general or spinal anaesthetic.

In a **flexible cystoscopy**, a local anaesthetic is applied to reduce sensation, but you are awake during the procedure. While there is no need to fast or be anaesthetized for a flexible cystoscopy, if the test detects that tissue needs to be removed, you will need to come back for a further procedure.

In either procedure, the cystoscope is gently inserted into the urethra once the anaesthetic (local, spinal or general) has taken effect. As the cystoscope is passed through the urethra, your urologist will inspect the mucosal layer for any abnormalities or obstructions. Once the cystoscope is in the bladder, sterile water or saline is slowly injected to expand the bladder to enable better vision. The entire bladder, including the lining, is inspected for abnormalities.

In a rigid cystoscopy, if required, a small device is passed through the cystoscope to collect tissue samples for a biopsy or treat any problems which may be detected.

## What happens after a cystoscopy?

After the cystoscopy you will be closely monitored in the recovery area. Recovery time will vary depending on the type of sedation given. In most cases, people are able to go home the same day.

If you have had a rigid cystoscopy, you should arrange for a friend or relative to accompany you when discharged, as you should not drive yourself home.

The day surgery or hospital should give you specific instructions about your ongoing treatment, any side effects you may experience once home (such as presence of blood in the urine) and any symptoms for which further assistance should be sought.



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