Medical Thoracoscopy

What is a thoracoscopy?

A thoracoscopy is a way of looking inside your chest to examine the chest wall using a special camera called a thoracoscope. It is inserted through a little hole (about 1-2cm) between the ribs on the side of chest and allows the doctor to look inside the chest.

The doctor can also take samples (called biopsies) from the pleura (the membrane lining the chest wall) and drain any fluid that has collected there. Some fluid is also sent for testing.

Why am I having the test

Most commonly, it is done to take samples from the pleura (the membrane lining the chest wall) to find out why fluid has collected in your chest and remove fluid which may have collected.

Sometimes sterile talc is sprayed inside the chest (talc ploudrage) to try and stop fluid building up again in the future.

We would expect this test to give us an answer in 9 out of 10 cases – very occasionally further tests may be needed.

What are the risks of Thoracoscopy?

Thoracoscopy is generally a very safe procedure. Any medical procedure carries a very small risk to life, but for thoracoscopy this is very low indeed (less than 1 in 1000).

All patients experience some pain, but this is rarely severe. Talc may be used to try and prevent recurrence of the fluid and this may cause some discomfort for up to 24 hours after the procedure. If any pain or discomfort occurs you will be given painkillers to help.

About 1 patient in every 100 suffers an infection at the site of the chest tube. If this occurs it can usually be treated with antibiotics. Very rarely such infections can be serious and require an operation.

About 1 or 2 patients in every 100 may develop bleeding. This is usually effectively treated at the time of the procedure, but might very, very rarely require an operation to control it.

Consenting to this procedure

A doctor will explain the procedure to you and ask you to sign a consent form. Questions or concerns should be discussed with a healthcare professional before you sign this form.

You should tell the doctor if:

- You are taking any medicines to "thin the blood" such as Aspirin, Warfarin or Clopidogrel. These medications may need to be stopped before the test.
- You have an artificial heart valve, a history of endocarditis (heart valve infection), rheumatic fever, or have had your spleen removed – you may be given antibiotics beforehand.
- You have any allergies.
- If you have had a heart attack or blood clot in the lungs in the last 6 weeks – the test may need to be done later.
- You suffer from asthma or COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease) – you may need further tests or medication to ensure it is safe to carry out the procedure.

What should I do before the test?

- You must not eat or drink for at least **four hours** before the test to prevent any sickness during or after the procedure.
- Any blood thinning medication (e.g. Aspirin, Clopidogrel, Warfarin) should have been stopped for at least 5 to 7 days.
- You should still take your usual medications with a small amount of water (diabetics will be advised by the medical staff on the ward).
- Because you are having sedation and will be staying in hospital, it is important you arrange transport to the hospital.
- Bring your usual medications with you.
- Bring any belongings you may need for a 3-4 night stay in hospital.

What happens when I arrive at the hospital?

- You will be contacted by ward 5 at Huddersfield Royal Infirmary about when to arrive on the ward.
- A member of the nursing team and a doctor will explain what will happen to you during your visit, and record some information in an admission document.
- You will be given an identity Band to wear on your wrist.
- You will be given a gown to wear and you should remove your watch and glasses if you wear them. Your rings will be taped.
- You may keep your dentures and hearing aids in.
- A "cannula" plastic needle will be inserted into your hand or arm which will allow medication to be given.

What happens during the test

- You will be asked to lie on your side (unaffected side). A probe will be placed on your finger to monitor your oxygen levels throughout the procedure, and you will be given oxygen through your nose using nasal cannulae. You will also be attached to leads to monitor your heart rate and blood pressure during the procedure.

- You will be given a sedative to make you feel sleepy and painkillers to prevent pain.
- The doctor may use an ultrasound machine to help find the best place to put the thoracoscope in. Then the area of the chest where the camera goes in will be numbed with an injection of local anaesthetic, this may sting a little at first but then numbs the area so that you do not feel anything during the procedure. A small cut is made in the side of your chest and the thoracoscope is passed through allowing us to see inside your chest.

- Once samples have been taken a plastic tube (a chest drain) is inserted though the cut to allow any fluid or air left inside to come out. The chest drain is stitched to the skin so that it does not fall out and attached to a bottle with water in it to allow fluid to drain.

- Occasionally we will need to insert a tube which is tunnelled under the skin and into the chest. This can stay in long term allowing fluid to be drained regularly if required. This is called an indwelling chest drain or pleural catheter.

- The procedure takes around an hour to complete.

What happens after the test?

- You will be taken back to your bed on the ward and made as comfortable as possible.

- You may have something to eat or drink after an hour if you are not too sleepy and able to manage.

- You may experience some pain or discomfort in your chest and if this happens please inform a member of the nursing staff so that they can give you some painkillers.

- You will be given instructions on looking after your chest drain.

How long will I be in hospital?

- This will vary but most people should be able to go home within 2 to 4 days but you may need to stay longer.

What happens on the day of discharge?

- You will need a chest x-ray to decide if the chest tube can be removed.

- Once your chest drain has been removed you will be able to go home.

- You will have a small stitch where your drain has been and this will need removing in 5 to 7 days by your GP or district nurse.

- You will be given an appointment to come back to the clinic for your results. Results will not usually be available before you are discharged.

Please contact your Consultant's secretary if you do not receive an appointment.

Is there anything I need to know for when I am at home?

- You can do light housework after 2 weeks but no heavy lifting for 6 weeks.
- If you are planning to go away by air travel shortly after the test please ask your doctor if it is safe for you to fly.
- If you have had a tunnelled chest drain/pleural catheter inserted the district nurses will visit you to drain fluid off as needed.

Useful numbers:

Ward 5 Huddersfield Royal Infirmary (HRI)	01484 355583 / 01484 355587
Dr. Hart –Thomas's Secretary (HRI)	01484 355655
Dr. Graham's Secretary (HRI)	01484 355581
Dr. Thomas's Secretary (Calderdale Royal Hospital)	01422 223122
Dr. Naseer's Secretary (Calderdale Royal Hospital)	01422 223122

If you have any comments about this leaflet or the service you have received you can contact :

Respiratory Physician

Respiratory Medicine

Huddersfield Royal Infirmary Telephone No: 01484 355655

www.cht.nhs.uk

If you would like this information in another format or language contact the above.

Potřebujete-li tyto informace v jiném formátu nebo jazyce, obrat'te se prosím na výše uvedené oddělení

Jeżeli są Państwo zainteresowani otrzymaniem tych informacji w innym formacie lub wersji językowej, prosimy skontaktować się z nami, korzystając z ww. danych kontaktowych

ਕ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਬਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਪ੍ਰਾਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ,
ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور فارمیٹ یا زبان میں درکار ہوں، تو
براہِ مہربانی مندرجہ بالا شعبے میں ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

"إذا احتجت الحصول على هذه المعلومة بشكل مغاير أو مترجمة إلى لغة مختلفة فيرجى منك الاتصال بالقسم المذكور أعلاه"

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