Fiberoptic bronchoscopy

A fiberoptic bronchoscopy (fi-e-ber-OP-tic brawn-CAH-scup-ee) is an exam that uses a thin, flexible tube with a camera called a bronchoscope (BRAWN-koe-scope) to look at the lungs.

**Why does my child need a fiberoptic bronchoscopy?**

Your child may need a fiberoptic bronchoscopy if they have:

- A lung infection such as pneumonia
- An airway blockage or narrowing
- A persistent cough without a known cause
- Spots in their lungs that were seen in a chest x-ray

**How do I prepare my child for the test?**

To prepare my child for their fiberoptic bronchoscopy:

- Tell the care team about your child’s allergies or other health concerns.
- Make sure your child does not eat or drink for a certain time before the bronchoscopy. You’ll receive specific instructions from your child’s doctor’s office.

A nurse will call the day before the bronchoscopy to tell you when to bring your child to the hospital.

**What happens during a fiberoptic bronchoscopy?**

Your child will receive medicine to help them sleep during the fiberoptic bronchoscopy. The healthcare provider will:

- Lubricate the bronchoscope
- Put the bronchoscope through your child’s nose or breathing tube. A breathing tube is placed if they receive general anesthesia. If the healthcare provider puts the bronchoscope through your child’s nose, they will numb it so your child doesn’t feel pain.
- Pass the bronchoscope down the windpipe and into the lungs
- Look at the lungs with the bronchoscope and take video or photos

The healthcare provider sometimes squirts saline (sterile salt water) into your child’s lungs and takes a sample of the lung cells. This is called a lavage. Your child will not feel this. A fiberoptic bronchoscopy usually takes 20–40 minutes.

**What happens after a fiberoptic bronchoscopy?**

After the exam, you can sit with your child while the healthcare provider discusses the results with you. If they did a lavage, you will receive the test results in 3–4 days.

Healthcare providers will watch your child for a few hours after the test, and then you can take them home. The nurse will tell you what your child can eat and which activities they should avoid for a while after the test.
What are the risks of a fiberoptic bronchoscopy?
The risks of a fiberoptic bronchoscopy are small and may include:

- Sore throat, hoarseness, or coughing for a short time
- A small amount of bleeding from the sample site
- Low-grade fever
- Wheezing
- Needing extra oxygen for a little while

The bronchoscopy is usually not painful.

Notes