Endobronchial ultrasound (EBUS)

Information for patients

What is EBUS

An EBUS is a procedure that allows the doctor to look into your lungs (similar to bronchoscopy) but then take samples of the glands in the centre of your chest (mediastinum) aided by the use of an ultrasound scanner.

A flexible tube (bronchoscope), which is about as thick as a pencil, is passed into your lungs via your mouth. A small camera at the end of the bronchoscope enables the doctor to look directly into your windpipe (trachea) and breathing tubes (bronchi). A small ultrasound probe on the end of the camera allows the doctor to see the glands in the centre of the chest (mediastinum) and take samples under direct supervision. Occasionally, it is useful to look down your gullet (oesophagus) at the same time with the same camera (the anaesthetic in your throat allows this), as sometimes the glands can be sampled from the gullet which often causes less coughing and is more comfortable for the patient with breathing difficulties.

Why am I having this procedure?

Most commonly, it is done to take samples from the central lymph glands in the centre of your chest (mediastinum) which may be enlarged for a variety of reasons. This procedure can be very helpful in aiding a diagnosis; in nine out of 10 cases we would expect this to be the case. This will then be beneficial in the decision making process regarding further treatment options.

Where is this procedure undertaken?

You will be informed of a time and date of your procedure and asked to attend the endoscopy department, which is located on level 3 in the Addenbrooke’s Treatment Centre.

What should I do before the procedure?

- It is vital that you arrange transport to and from the hospital and have someone at home with you afterwards as you will be given sedation for the procedure.
- You should not eat four hours before the procedure, but you may have clear drinks for up to two hours beforehand.
- Take your usual medication(s) with a small sip of water.
- Wear clothing that is comfortable and not too tight fitting.
• You will be asked to remove all jewellery (except wedding bands), so it would be wise to leave valuables at home.
• You should inform the doctor if you take any medicines which ‘thin the blood’ such as: **Aspirin, Warfarin, Clopidogrel, Clexane or Dalteparin** for example.

**What happens during the procedure?**

This procedure is carried out under sedation and anaesthetic spray is applied to the back of the throat. During the procedure you may feel some slight discomfort as the bronchoscope is passed through your mouth, further anaesthetic is applied through the bronchoscope at the level of the voice box, this may make you cough but will settle down as the anaesthetic begins to work. The bronchoscope is then moved further down into an appropriate area for obtaining samples.

Your oxygen levels will be monitored throughout and a small oxygen tube may be placed inside your nostril during the procedure. As sedation has been administered to you, this may stay in place for a short while afterwards.

**What are the risks or complications?**

It is common to have a minor sore throat which settles down quickly, you may also cough up a little blood after the procedure and this should not alarm you. However, if you cough up large amounts, feel unwell, or develop a fever, please contact your GP or your accident and emergency department if out of hours.

Extremely rarely, infection can occur following the procedure but this is usually easily treated with antibiotics.

Following EBUS there is a very small risk of air or blood leaking into the centre of the chest. These conditions are characterised by chest pain and shortness of breath. Any concerns within five days post procedure please contact the pleural service team between 09:00-17:00 (Monday-Friday) or if out of hours please contact the respiratory specialist registrar via the hospital switchboard. Please find the contact numbers below.

**When will I know the results of the procedure?**

You will receive an appointment to discuss the results of the samples taken; this is approximately two weeks after the procedure.

**Contacts/ Further information**

Pleural service – 01223 349189
Respiratory specialist registrar – out of hours – 01223 245151


References/ Sources of evidence


Privacy & Dignity

Same sex bays and bathrooms are offered in all wards except critical care and theatre recovery areas where the use of high-tech equipment and/or specialist one to one care is required.

We are now a smoke-free site: smoking will not be allowed anywhere on the hospital site. For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169.

Other formats:

If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio please ask the department where you are being treated, to contact the patient information team: patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk. Please note: We do not currently hold many leaflets in other languages; written translation requests are funded and agreed by the department which has authored the leaflet.

Document history

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