

## Patient information

### **Bronchoscopy and Bronchoalveolar Lavage BAL**

#### Critical Care Department

#### **What is it?**

**Bronchoscopy (Bronch)** – this is a procedure whereby a doctor passes a flexible (fibre-optic) camera into the patient's windpipe (also known as trachea).

**Bronchoalveolar Lavage** – this is a procedure whereby we instil sterile saline solution to patient's lungs, wash out the secretions and then take samples to conduct further tests.

#### **Why is it being done?**

The procedure allows us to ensure that the windpipe is of normal appearance, clear the secretions, take samples for analysis and rarely, take a small piece of the suspicious tissue (known as biopsy) if there is a gross abnormality.

This is performed when patient has pneumonia, suspected blockage or secretions in the airways. It is also used to aid the placement of other tubes (e.g. a tracheostomy) into the windpipe.

#### **How is it inserted?**

In most patients, this procedure is performed while the patient is heavily sedated. The camera is passed through a breathing tube (ET tube or tracheostomy).



Occasionally, this procedure is performed on patients whilst still awake either to allow us to insert an endotracheal tube (known as awake fiberoptic intubation) or to get sputum samples.

On such occasions, the patient may be given a local anaesthetic or a mild sedative medication in order to make the procedure less uncomfortable.

## **What are the risks?**

Like all the procedures carried out in a critical care unit, this procedure carries a small risk of bleeding or infection.

This may also cause deterioration in a patient's oxygen level. If a biopsy is taken, there may be a risk of damage to the lung.

## **Feedback**

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

## **Further information**

**For further information please contact below**

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