

Flexible Bronchoscopy

What is involved?

A bronchoscope is a flexible fibreoptic telescope used to examine the windpipe and the branches of the airways. It is passed through the mouth or nose whenever the child is anaesthetised. Useful information can be obtained from the appearance of the airways, but frequently washing or 'lavage' samples of the cells, bacteria and viruses in the airways are also taken.

Most children will undergo the procedure and go home on the same day. The child may have a fever on the first or second day following bronchoscopy which is usually easily controlled with paracetamol. Some children with more severe breathing or other medical problems may need to stay longer in hospital.

Fasting Instructions for flexible bronchoscopy

Flexible bronchoscopy in children is usually performed in the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children under general anaesthesia.

The child will usually be booked on a 'morning list' or an 'afternoon list'. The morning list typically starts at 08.30 am and runs until around 13.00 pm. The afternoon list starts at around 13.30 pm and can run until after 17.00 pm. A child on one or other list can go to theatre at any time during the list. Even if they are expected to go first, second or last on the list, the order may change at the last minute and they could go earlier or later than expected. Therefore all children on the morning list should be prepared to go at any time between 08.30 to 13.00 and should be fasted accordingly. Similarly children on the afternoon list can go to theatre between 13.30 and 17.00.

Fasting for planned general anaesthesia is usually as follows:

- No solid food or milk in the six hours before theatre
- Clear oral fluids are allowed from six hours up to two hours before theatre (not milk or fruit juice with 'bits')
- No food or fluids in the two hours before theatre

Therefore for the morning list, children can have:

- Supper (up until 02.30 am)
- Clear fluids (up to 06.30 am)

For the afternoon list, children can have:

- Light breakfast (up until 07.30 am)
- Clear fluids (up until 11.30 am)

Not sticking to these fasting instructions puts the child at risk of vomiting and aspiration at the start of the anaesthetic. The anaesthetist will usually cancel the procedure if the fasting instructions are not followed.