

Mediastinoscopy

Before and After Your Surgery

Purpose

A mediastinoscopy is a surgical procedure which allows the doctor to look in the mediastinum (the area inside the middle of the chest). This procedure will help the doctor determine if cancer is present. Your doctor may remove tissue from this area so that he or she can identify the type of cancer you have and how far it has spread. Mediastinoscopy may be used alone or just before a thoracotomy (surgery to open the chest).

Preparation

The night before your surgery, scrub your chest and neck thoroughly with anti-bacterial soap.

Do not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before surgery.

Procedure

While you are asleep in the operating room, a small incision will be made at the base of the neck just above the breastbone, and an instrument will be passed into the mediastinum to view the area. The lymph nodes in your mediastinum will be removed and sent to the lab for study. The presence or absence of cancer cells (or other disorders) in the lymph nodes will help determine the extent of surgery and the need for further treatment.

After the Procedure

The small incision on the lower part of your neck will be sore and swollen for about a week. The stitches used to close the incision will dissolve, so you will not have to see a doctor to have them removed. After 48 hours, you may wash the area with soap and water and pat dry. Steri-Strips™ (small strips of tape that hold an incision together) may be removed in approximately one week or when they loosen.

Precautions

If you have any hoarseness, fever, difficulty swallowing, or redness, drainage or bleeding from the incision, tell your doctor immediately.