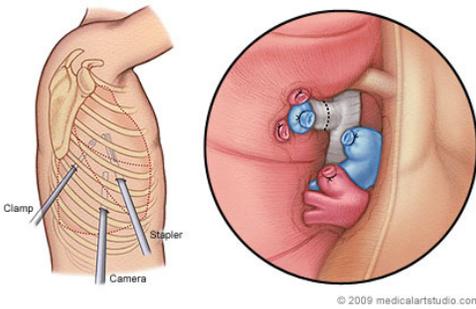


Video Assisted Thoracic Surgery



What is Video Assisted Thoracic Surgery?

Video-assisted thoracic surgery (VATS) is a way to look at the lungs and other tissue in the chest cavity. A doctor puts a tiny telescope and surgical tools through small openings in the chest. The telescope is connected to a video camera that lets the doctor see a picture of the lungs. The doctor can take out small pieces of tissue, remove large portions of lung and/or remove lymph nodes during VATS.

What will the surgery tell me?

The results following VATS depend on the reasons why it was performed. VATS can provide a specific diagnosis if tissue is removed, evaluate the extent of disease and play a role in treatment.

Who will perform the surgery? And where will the surgery be done?

A thoracic surgeon (a surgeon who specializes in procedures involving the chest) will perform your VATS. Your surgical procedure will be performed at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre.

How do I prepare for the surgery?

Make sure that you tell your doctor about any allergies you have and what drugs, vitamins, herbs, and other supplements you are taking. This includes drugs and supplements bought without a prescription. If you are a smoker, you should stop smoking several weeks before your surgery.

During the week before your surgery:

- You may be asked to stop taking drugs that make it hard for your blood to clot. Some of these are aspirin, ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), warfarin (Coumadin), clopidogrel (Plavix), or ticlopidine (Ticlid).
- Ask your doctor which drugs you should still take on the day of your surgery.
- Prepare your home for your return from the hospital.

On the day of your surgery:

- Your doctor or nurse will give you specific instructions when you arrive at the hospital.
- Do not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before your surgery.
- Take the medications your doctor prescribed with small sips of water.

Will the surgery be painful?

You will receive general anesthesia before surgery. You will be asleep and unable to feel pain.

After your surgery, the incision sites and your general chest area may be painful for several weeks to months.

Your doctor will prescribe pain medication for you.

What will happen during the surgery?

The operation usually takes 1 to 4 hours.

Before surgery begins, you will be given general anesthesia through an IV (a tube that goes into your veins). The doctor will make 2 or more openings in the skin of your chest. He or she will put the small telescope through 1 opening and surgical tools through the others. The sites and size of your incisions depends on the location and size of the area to be worked on. When the surgery is done, the telescope and surgical tools will be taken out and the incisions will be closed with stitches. One or more tubes may be placed into your chest area to drain out fluids that build up. These tubes are called chest tubes.

What will happen after the surgery?

A hospital stay is required after VATS for up to 7 days. Often an ICU stay is also required for a short period of time after the surgical procedure.

During your hospital stay, you will:

- Be asked to sit on the side of the bed and walk as soon as possible after surgery
- Be asked to do a lot of deep breathing and deep breathing exercises to help prevent pneumonia and infection
- Have tube(s) coming out of the side of your chest to drain fluids
- Receive medication to prevent blood clots
- Receive pain medicine through an IV (a tube that goes into your veins) or by mouth with pills

When will I know the results of the surgery?

Your doctor will discuss the results with you following the surgery. A pathology report will be sent to your doctor after the surgery and the results will be discussed with you at your next visit.

Seek IMMEDIATE medical attention if:

- Your incision is red, swollen, hot to the touch
- You notice discharge from your incision
- You experience a fever above 38.5° C
- You experience an extreme shortness of breath

