



Liver Biopsy

Your doctor has referred you for a Liver Biopsy. Please read this leaflet carefully. We hope you will find this information helpful.

What is a liver biopsy?

A liver biopsy is performed to diagnose and monitor certain conditions of the liver including cirrhosis, some metabolic liver disorders or inflammation of the liver (hepatitis). It involves taking a small sample of tissue from the liver and this is analysed under a microscope in the laboratory.

How is a liver biopsy done?

You will be asked to lie on the bed on your back, or on your left side, and elevate your right arm above your head. After your skin is cleansed with antiseptic, local anaesthetic is injected into a small area of your skin over your liver (usually between your two lower ribs on your right hand side). A hollow needle is then pushed through the skin into the liver to retrieve a small sample of liver tissue and because of the anaesthetic, you should not feel any pain, however, you may feel pressure. This method of biopsy is called a percutaneous biopsy.

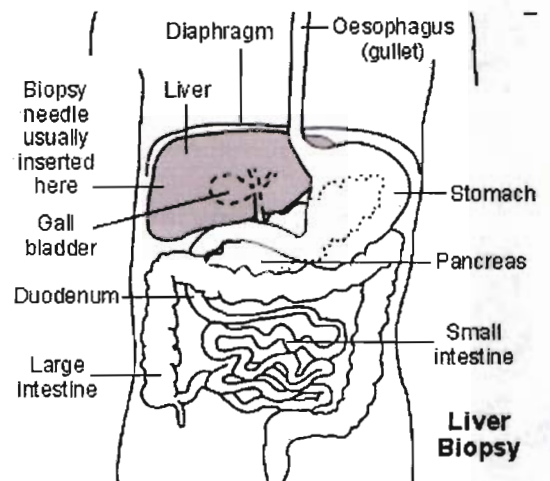
The doctor will need you to stay very still on full expiration and hold your breath for 5-10 seconds while he inserts the needle. This is because the liver moves slightly when you breathe. The procedure takes 5-10 minutes.

There are also other methods for a liver biopsy. These include ultrasound guided and transjugular.

The ultrasound-guided biopsy involves the use of an ultrasound machine, which produces an image of your liver, and this allows for guidance of the needle into a specific spot. This procedure takes 5-10 minutes.

The transjugular biopsy involves inserting a tube, called a catheter, into a vein in the neck and guiding it into the liver to allow the insertion of a biopsy needle. A transjugular biopsy takes about 30 minutes.

Sometimes your biopsy may require you to stay overnight but your doctor or nurse will advise you on this preferably well in advance.



IMPORTANT PREPARATION

Please ensure to mention ALL medications that you take to the doctor.

One week before your biopsy the doctor may ask you to stop some medications.

If you take regular Warfarin or Aspirin this needs careful and individual management and must be discussed with you doctor at least a week before your biopsy is due.

**PLEASE CONTACT YOUR CONSULTANT, VIA HIS SECRETARY IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS REGARDING YOUR MEDICATION.
0207460 5560 OR 5557**

You will need to have blood tests done within 48 hours of your biopsy.

You must NOT eat or drink anything for 4 hours before your biopsy.

What happens after the biopsy?

After the procedure the nurse will put a dressing over the incision and you can lie on your right side. The nurse will monitor your incision site, blood pressure, pulse and pain level. You may experience some pain/discomfort at the biopsy site and possibly over your right shoulder (referred pain). This can be treated with oral painkillers, which are usually sufficient, but please tell your nurse if not.

You will not be able to get out of bed until 6 hours after the procedure, however, after 2 hours you can lie on your back and sit up slightly to eat and drink

You will need to arrange for someone to take you home from hospital as you will not be allowed to drive, and it is recommended you have someone with you for the next 12-24 hours.

You should also avoid exertion for the next week, eg. heavy lifting or exercise other than walking.

What are the risks?

Complications are very uncommon. However, the main risks are bleeding (0.3%) and blood clot in the abdomen (1-2%). Other organ puncture is possible but very rare as is infection.

What should I bring into hospital?

It is recommended that you bring a list of all your medications and the dosage so that the medical team are aware of what medication you have been taking.

A percutaneous (through the skin) liver biopsy usually only involves a day admission, however, it is recommended that you bring an overnight bag with you in case of unforeseen events.

You may also wish to bring reading material or an mp3 player to pass the time.

When do I get the results?

The liver sample will usually take 2-3 days to be analysed at the laboratory and an appointment will be made for you to see your consultant in their outpatient's clinic the following week.

If you have any concerns please contact the Surgical and Hepatobiliary Centre.

Further information

Liver Secretaries: 020 7460 5560
020 7460 5557