



PATIENT INFORMATION

Liver Biopsy

What is a liver biopsy?

You have been asked to have a liver biopsy to help us diagnose and treat a possible liver problem.

A Liver Biopsy is the removal of a small piece of liver tissue through the skin by using a special needle. This can then be used to diagnose many disorders of the liver.

This leaflet will explain the procedure and hopefully answer any questions or concerns you may have.

Preparation for the biopsy

- ❖ Please make an appointment with the practice nurse at your GP surgery, **no more than 5 working days** before your biopsy, in order to have a blood test. Please take along the enclosed request form.
- ❖ **Please inform us if you are on Warfarin / Clopidogrel or diabetic.**
- ❖ **On the day of the liver biopsy** do not have anything to eat for 6 hours leading up to the procedure, but you can drink fluids up until 2 hours before the procedure.
- ❖ If you are on regular medication, then this can be taken with a small amount of water.
- ❖ Rarely, it may be necessary for you to stay in hospital overnight so please bring with you enough belongings for such a stay.
- ❖ Please ensure that someone can escort you home and remain with you overnight. If this is not possible, please inform us and arrangements will be made to admit you overnight.
- ❖ When you arrive in the department, the nurse looking after you will explain the biopsy procedure and ensure that you fully understand what is going to happen.

Please tell her if you have any **allergies or bad reactions** to drugs, solutions or any other substances.

- ❖ The nurse will also want to know of any other illnesses or operations that may be relevant.
- ❖ The doctor performing the biopsy will ask you to sign a **consent form** to confirm you understand the procedure and what it involves.
- ❖ If you have any worries or concerns at this stage, please ask. We want you to be as relaxed as possible for the biopsy and will be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Ultrasound examination

Before the biopsy, you will have an ultrasound examination of your liver. This is a simple procedure where a gel is placed on your tummy and a probe is placed on your skin. A picture is then displayed on the monitor for the radiologist to view. The radiologist will scan the liver and identify where the biopsy will be taken and mark the spot with a pen.

The liver biopsy

You will need to change into nightclothes or hospital gown before the biopsy. The doctor will insert a small plastic tube (venflon) into a vein in your hand or arm and this will stay in place for 4 hours after the procedure. Pain relief can be given through the venflon if required. The doctor will then clean the biopsy site with iodine solution and inject a local anaesthetic under the skin. This will sting a little, but will subside, as the area becomes numb.

The doctor will then insert the needle through the numb area and a small tissue sample will be obtained. Once the biopsy has been taken, pressure will be applied to the biopsy site to stop any slight bleeding and a dressing will be applied over the site.

After the biopsy

- ❖ The doctor will ask you to lie still for 2 hours.
- ❖ Your blood pressure, pulse and breathing will be monitored every 15 minutes for the first 2 hours.
- ❖ The nurse will also check your biopsy site and ask if you are in any pain.
- ❖ After 2 hours, you will be able to sit up slowly and take fluids.
- ❖ After 4 hours you will be able to eat and drink normally and you will be able to get out of bed, get dressed and we will encourage you to move about.
- ❖ You will be allowed home 6 hours after the procedure. We ask that you are accompanied home and are not alone that evening.

- ❖ An aftercare advice sheet will be given to you and an outpatient appointment arranged for you to return to see the doctor for the result of the biopsy.

Risk factors

There is a small risk of a significant complication occurring, such as bleeding. The chances of this happening are less than 1 in 200.

Pain is probably the commonest complication but is usually mild. Pain relief is always offered if you experience discomfort or pain.

After care service

- ❖ Go home and rest for the remainder of the day.
- ❖ Do not drive, lift any heavy objects or do anything strenuous for the next 48 hours.
- ❖ You may eat and drink as normal.
- ❖ If you experience any pain or discomfort, please take your normal pain relief.

Useful contacts

If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact:

Sheila Needs, Liver Specialist Nurse
☎ **Tel (01803) 614567**, bleep no **6936**
(Monday to Thursday)

or

☎ **Tel (01803) 654950**
between the hours of 8am-5pm
(Monday to Friday)