

Ultrasound guided biopsy

Radiology Department
Tel: 01271 311869

Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio tape or computer disk, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please telephone the PALS desk on 01271 314090.

What is a biopsy?

A biopsy is a test where a tiny amount of tissue is taken.

Why is it needed?

The biopsy will help your doctor make a correct diagnosis of your problem, so that you receive appropriate treatment.

What does it involve?

The doctor who is performing the procedure will clean the skin and then inject some local anaesthetic to numb the skin around the area of the biopsy. The doctor will use a special needle to take the piece of tissue. This is then sent for microscopic examination, providing valuable information for your doctor.

How long will it take?

The procedure usually takes around 30 minutes and is carried out in the Radiology Department.

How to find us

If you come through the main hospital entrance, take the second corridor on your right (just before the coffee shop). Continue half way down the corridor and then take a left turn to the radiology reception desk.

What preparations are needed?

You may have had blood forms in the post to check your blood clotting before the biopsy is carried out. This is to check that the blood-clotting process is normal and reduces further risk of bleeding. **If you have received these forms with your appointment letter, please arrange to have the blood tests done at your GP surgery or medical centre a few days before your appointment.**

If you are on anticoagulants such as warfarin, rivaroxaban or anti-platelets such as aspirin or clopidogrel, we recommend you discuss this with your doctor as soon as possible to ensure the correct drug regime is in place for your biopsy. You may need to stop taking these drugs a few days before your biopsy.

On the day of your procedure you should have a light breakfast before 7am. Please take your normal medication.

You should register at **Radiology A** department where you will be prepared for your biopsy. If your blood results have been assessed, we may need to improve clotting by giving you a platelet or plasma transfusion.

You will be asked to wear a hospital gown.

Consent

We must by law obtain your prior written consent to any operation and some procedures. The doctor doing the biopsy will explain the procedure, all the risks, benefits and alternatives before they ask you to sign a consent form. If you are unsure about any aspect of procedure, please do not hesitate to ask a member of staff. **Please note that this form may be included with your appointment letter. If so, please bring it with you to your appointment.**

How will I feel during the test?

The local anaesthetic may sting for a short time, but the biopsy should be pain-free. The position in which you are asked to lie during the biopsy may be uncomfortable for a short while.

How will I feel afterwards?

Immediately after the biopsy you may experience a little discomfort at the biopsy site. If you experience any pain please alert the nursing staff and they will provide painkillers.

What happens after the test?

After the biopsy you will be taken to the Radiology Recovery Area. You will be observed until discharge home. The length of observation time depends upon the site of the biopsy (1 – 4 hours). If you have an uneventful recovery you will be able to go home later the same day.

A nurse will measure your blood pressure, pulse and breathing at intervals to make sure that you are not bleeding internally.

Are there any risks?

Most biopsies are carried out using ultrasound guidance, which causes no radiation exposure.

Bleeding

The risk of a significant bleed after a biopsy is small. If this occurs, you may need a blood transfusion.

Procedure failure

The risk of obtaining inadequate or inappropriate tissue is minimised by the use of ultrasound guidance. Rarely, after the sample has been analysed, the procedure may need to be repeated at a later date.

Are there any alternatives?

The only alternative for obtaining this tissue involves a surgical operation.

Follow-up

The results will take approximately three to seven working days and will be sent to the person who referred you for the biopsy.

What should I do when I get home?

- Rest for the remainder of the day.
- Take your normal painkillers if you have pain. However, you must **avoid restarting aspirin** if it has been stopped for 24 hours.
- Keep the dressing dry for the next 24 hours. It may be removed after 48 hours.
- Bleeding from the puncture site is rare but if there is any, press on the wound site for 10 – 20 minutes and it should stop.
- We advise you to take the day following your biopsy off work, particularly if your job involves lifting.

Further information

If you have any questions or concerns about your biopsy, please contact the radiology nurses on **01271 311869** (8am – 6pm, Monday – Friday), your GP or nearest A&E department.

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or e-mail ndht.pals@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

Have your say

Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

'Care Opinion' comments forms are on all wards or online at www.careopinion.org.uk.

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