

## **INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS UNDERGOING A PERCUTANEOUS BIOPSY**

This leaflet has been provided to help answer some of the questions you may have about your biopsy.

### **What is a biopsy?**

A biopsy is a test in which the doctor removes a small sample of tissue through a small incision under local anaesthetic.

### **What happens during the test?**

The exact technique may vary slightly but the general outline of the procedure is as follows.

A fine needle will be passed into the area in question and a small piece of tissue will be taken for examination under the microscope. It is done under local anaesthetic and you will be awake during the test.

### **Why do I need a biopsy?**

The reason you need a biopsy is in order to obtain tissue so that the nature of this tissue can be assessed under the microscope. This enables the doctors to make a precise diagnosis. When the diagnosis is known treatment may be given.

### **What are the risks or complications?**

Complications are rare. However, biopsy can result in complications, such as damage to the organ from which the sample has been taken or organs that are close to it. The chance of complication depends on exactly where the biopsy has been taken from and your doctor will explain this to you

Complications occur from time to time. The doctors are aware of such complications and they will make you aware of the complications so that, should one occur, prompt and appropriate treatment will be given.

### **What happens before the test?**

Most patients have usually undergone an x-ray, an ultrasound or a CT/MRI scan. This imaging gives the doctor an idea the structure is that he is biopsying, the extent of the region in question and a guide as to any other structures nearby that may be involved.

### **Do I need any other tests?**

You may to be asked to give blood a day or so before your appointment. This is usually to check that your blood clotting is normal. This test is necessary as

there is increased risk of bleeding after a procedure if your clotting tests are abnormal.

### **What preparation do I need for the test?**

This entirely dependent on where the biopsy is. If a deep organ were being biopsied it would be appropriate not to have a large meal prior to the procedure. However, if a relatively superficial lesion is being biopsied, eating and drinking before the procedure may be allowed. You should discuss this with the attending doctor prior to admission.

It is important to continue to take any medicines, though you should notify your doctor before any biopsy as some tablets may need to be stopped.

### **Do I need to bring anything with me?**

After you have had your biopsy you may be asked to rest in bed for the next 6 hours. It is generally advisable to bring books, magazines and personal stereo to help pass the time. Wear comfortable loose clothing as you may be resting in bed afterwards.

### **What will happen on the day of the test?**

The doctor and/or nurse will explain the procedure to you and ask any questions you may have. You will then be asked to sign a consent form if you have not already done so. This is to ensure that you understand the risks and the benefits of having the test.

You will be taken to the x-ray department where your doctor will marked on the skin the spot from where the biopsy will be taken from. In most incidences you will be asked to change into a hospital gown and lie on a bed or on a trolley. The doctor will give you an injection of local anaesthetic to numb the area and then undertake the biopsy and a small dressing will be placed over the wound.

### **What happens after the test?**

You may be asked to lie in a specific position depending on the site and the nature of the biopsy. Your blood pressure, pulse and temperature will be checked at regular intervals to detect any problems.

### **Will there be any pain?**

When the local anaesthetic is administered it often stings but this resolves very quickly. Depending on the site and the nature of the biopsy some patients do find there is minor discomfort. It is important if you find this procedure uncomfortable or painful to let the doctor know during the procedure so appropriate pain-killing drugs can be given.

### **When can I eat and drink?**

Most patients can eat and drink a few hours after the procedure.

### **When can I go home?**

If you have had a major biopsy it is often not appropriate to go home on the same day. Most patients are allowed home at the end of the day providing there have been no complications.

### **How do I care for my wound at home?**

A small waterproof or gauze dressing will be placed over the site after the test and can be replaced if needed. You can remove this dressing after 2-3 days.

### **What about taking a shower or bath?**

You will be able to have a shower the day after your biopsy and a bath 2-3 days after.

### **When will I get the biopsy results?**

Once the sample of tissue has been sent to the laboratory for analysis a series of complex procedures are necessary to obtain the diagnosis. This can often take up to a week. The results will be sent to your hospital doctor. An outpatient appointment will be made for you to discuss the results with your doctor.

### **When can I go back to work?**

In most instances the day after your biopsy should be spent resting quietly at home. When you return to work will depend on your job. If your job involves heavy manual work you may be advised to take a week off. If your job does not include manual work or lifting you may be able to return to work 2 days after the biopsy.

### **Is there anything I should avoid doing?**

You should not participate in strenuous sports for the first 10 days after your biopsy. You should avoid heavy lifting and carrying heavy shopping.

### **Is there anything I need to watch for?**

Please contact your GP or the unit in which your biopsy was taken if there is severe pain around the site of biopsy or if there are any worsening difficulties with normal daily activities and temperature.

### **Finally...**

Some of your questions should have been answered by this leaflet, but remember that this is only a starting point for discussion about your treatment with the doctors looking after you. Make sure you are satisfied that you have received enough information about the procedure, before you sign the consent form.

This leaflet is produced with grateful acknowledgement to the Patients' Liaison Group of the Royal College of Radiologists. The current leaflets are largely based on their work.

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