

# Ultrasound-guided biopsy

Information for patients



A biopsy is a procedure to take a small sample of tissue from a certain place in your body. A very thin biopsy needle is inserted through your skin to the area where the sample needs to be collected.

The ultrasound scanner uses high frequency sound waves which reflect back off your internal organs to make an image on the screen. This image is then used to guide the needle to the right place. A small piece of tissue is then collected. This sample or 'biopsy' is sent to the laboratory to be analysed.

## What are the benefits?

Other tests that you have had, such as blood tests, ultrasound scans, or CT scans have shown an abnormality. The doctors looking after you have decided that you should have a biopsy to help them find out what the abnormality might be and why it is there. They will then be able to decide on the most suitable treatment for you.

## What are the risks?

Ultrasound-guided biopsy is generally considered a safe procedure. There is a small risk of bleeding where the needle has been inserted. Other small risks vary according to which part of the body is being biopsied.

The doctor performing the biopsy will discuss the specific risks with you before asking your permission to perform the biopsy.

## What does the procedure involve?

You will be taken to the radiology department and, when your biopsy is due to start, a member of staff will show you into the ultrasound room where you will meet the doctor.

The doctor will explain the biopsy procedure, how the biopsy will

be performed and the risks involved. The doctor will then ask you to sign the consent form to give your permission for the biopsy to go ahead.

The doctor will also ask if you will allow the biopsy sample to be stored so that it may be used for research. This may benefit other patients in the future; the biopsy will be performed in the same way whether you answer yes or no. If you have any questions or concerns, please ask the doctor.

You will be asked to change into a hospital gown and lie on the ultrasound bed. The doctor will spread some gel on your skin and use the ultrasound probe to decide the best position from which to take the tissue sample.

The doctor will clean your skin and use a small needle to inject local anaesthetic to numb the area. This will cause some stinging at first but should not be too uncomfortable.

The biopsy needle will be inserted through your skin into the abnormal area and a sample will be collected.

During the biopsy procedure the doctor may ask you to hold your breath for a few seconds. If you find this difficult, just do the best you can.

Two or three tissue samples may be taken whilst the needle is inserted, to give the doctors looking at the specimen as much information as possible.

The biopsy procedure takes approximately 30 minutes.

## Does it hurt?

You should only feel a minor scratch or discomfort during the biopsy, usually when the local anaesthetic is injected.

## What happens after the procedure?

After your biopsy the specimen is sent to the histology department for analysis by the histopathologist. This process can take up to two weeks to enable the specimen to be looked at in detail.

Once the diagnosis has been made your case will be discussed again at the Monday morning multidisciplinary meeting, attended by a number of doctors, nurses, histopathologists, oncologists and radiologists. The diagnosis is compared against the X-rays and scans previously taken and a plan of treatment is agreed between all members of the team.

The diagnosis and plan of treatment are then discussed with you in a face to face consultation in the outpatient department.

Whilst we fully understand your anxieties whilst waiting for results, it is not our policy to give out any diagnosis over the telephone.

## What happens when I go home?

The radiology department will give you information and advice about what to do when you go home and anything you might need to look out for.

If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter, a document in Easy Read, another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221 473** or email **PALSJR@ouh.nhs.uk**

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