



Department of Radiology

Percutaneous Biopsy

What is a percutaneous biopsy?

A needle biopsy is a way of taking a small sample of tissue to be examined under a microscope. As this biopsy is done through the skin, it is called a percutaneous biopsy.

Why do you need a biopsy?

Other tests that you probably have had performed, such as an Ultrasound or a CT scan, will have shown that there is an area of abnormal tissue. From the scan, it is not always possible to say exactly what the abnormality is due to and the simplest way of finding this out is by taking a tiny tissue sample and to look at it under a microscope.

Benefits

Make a diagnosis to ensure that treatment is appropriate.

Risks?

Percutaneous biopsy is a very safe procedure but as with any medical procedure there are some slight risks and possible complications involved.

Bleeding

If you are having a liver, kidney or spleen biopsy there is a slight risk of bleeding. If bleeding was to continue it is possible that you might need a blood transfusion. Very rarely, an operation or another radiological procedure is required to stop the bleeding.

Allergic reactions

Tell your consultant if you have any allergies or if you have had a reaction to any drugs or procedures in the past.

Unfortunately, not all biopsies are successful. In this instance, a repeat biopsy procedure or an alternative may be required.

Females 11-55 years

Imaging under CT control must be undertaken within the first 10 days from the beginning of your period. If this appointment does not fall within the first 10 days, please rebook your appointment by telephoning:

Ulster appointments (028) 9055 0476

Lagan Valley appointments (028) 9250 1262

Downe appointments (028) 4451 3867

Preparation

If you take medication to thin the blood, please contact your Consultant as this medication must be stopped for a specific length of time before the procedure.

Please arrange for a friend or relative to collect you following the procedure. It is essential that a responsible adult remains with you for the next 24 hours. If this cannot be arranged please inform your referring Consultant's secretary who will organise an overnight stay in hospital.

The procedure

Fasting

You must not eat for six hours before the procedure; however you may drink clear fluids such as water until two hours before.

Within 2 hours of the procedure prescribed medications, especially pre-medication can be taken with a small drink of water (30ml).

If you are a diabetic and need advice about fasting, please contact the hospital's Diabetic Advice team prior to admission on (028) 9056 1426.

Admission

A biopsy is usually carried out as a day procedure. During admission you will be asked about your medical history. A small plastic port (known as a cannula) will be placed in a vein and blood samples will be taken. You will be asked to change into a gown before transfer to the Department of Radiology.

The procedure

A biopsy usually takes less than half an hour. You will meet a number of staff who will look after you during the procedure. You must have a clear understanding of what the procedure involves including the risks and benefits. If you have not already done so, you will be asked to sign a consent form and the Radiologist will answer any questions you may have.

The Radiologist will use an Ultrasound system or a CT system to decide on the most suitable point for inserting the needle. The skin will be cleaned with an antiseptic solution and then numbed with an injection of local anaesthetic to guide the needle into the correct place to take the biopsy.

Recovery

After the procedure you will be transferred to the ward. You must stay in bed for approximately 4 hours and nursing staff will carry out routine observations.

You should be able to return to work the day following the procedure unless you are told otherwise. You can resume normal activities but should avoid lifting and strenuous exercise for 48 hours.

Results

The results of your biopsy will take approximately one week and will be forwarded to your consultant who will contact you directly.

Contact details

Ulster Hospital
Department of Radiology
Upper Newtownards Road
Dundonald
BT16 1RH
(028) 9055 0476

DOR	LFT/IRR/08	Author: E Kennedy	V3	Issue: August 2020	Review: August 2023
-----	------------	-------------------	----	--------------------	---------------------