Mersey and West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals
NHS Trust

Having a Percutaneous Liver Biopsy

Patient information leaflet

If you need this leaflet in a different language or accessible format please speak to a member of staff who can arrange it for you.

اگر به این بروشور به زبان دیگر یا در قالب دسترس‌پذیر نیاز دارید،
لطفاً با یکی از کارکنان صحبت کنید تا آن را برای شما تهیه کند.

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Dacă aveți nevoie de această broșură într-o altă limbă sau într-un format accesibil,
vă rog să discutați cu un membru al personalului să se ocupe
de acest lucru pentru dumneavoastră

如果您需要本传单的其他语言版本或无障碍格式，请联系工作人员为您安排。

إذا احتجت إلى هذه النشرة بلغة أُخرى، أو بتنسيق
يسهل الوصول إليه، يرجى التحدث إلى أحد الموظفين لترتيب ذلك لك.

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Introduction

Having a Percutaneous Liver Biopsy

This leaflet tells you about having a percutaneous liver biopsy. It explains what is involved and what the possible risks are. It is not meant to replace informed discussion between you and your doctor but can act as a starting point for such discussions. If you have any questions about the procedure, please ask the doctor who has referred you or the department which is going to perform it.

What is a Percutaneous liver biopsy?

A percutaneous liver biopsy is a procedure that involves taking a tiny specimen of the liver for examination under a microscope. In most cases, a liver biopsy is taken by passing a fine needle through the skin at the side of the abdomen into the liver.

Why do you need a Percutaneous liver biopsy?

The doctors looking after you have decided that you need a liver biopsy to obtain more information about your liver problem. The information gained from the biopsy will help the doctors in the treatment of your condition.

Are there any risks?

A liver biopsy is a safe procedure, but as with any medical procedure there are some risks and complications that can arise. The overall risk of a problem requiring further treatment is low (1–2%).The main risk is bleeding after the biopsy.

Who has made the decision?

The consultant in charge of your care and the interventional radiologist performing the procedure have discussed your case and feel that this is the best option. However, you will also have the opportunity for your opinion to be considered and if, after discussion with your doctors, you do not want the procedure carried out, you can decide against it.

How should I prepare for the procedure?

Are you required to make any special preparations?

A liver biopsy is carried out as a day case procedure under local anaesthetic, however in some circumstances a night stay in hospital may be required. You will have some blood tests performed beforehand to check that you do not have an increased risk of bleeding. If you are taking any blood thinning medications, you will be given instructions when to stop these before your procedure.

Who will you see?

A specially trained team of radiographers and nurses led by an interventional radiologist within the radiology department. Interventional radiologists have special expertise in reading the images and using imaging to guide needle position to aid diagnosis and treatment.

All members of the team will be in scrubs during the procedure but will introduce themselves to you



You will be given the opportunity to ask the interventional radiologist any questions you have. You will need to sign a consent form before the biopsy can take place

Where will the procedure take place?

The procedure will take place in the Radiology Department in a special “screening room” design specially for this type of procedure. This is similar to an operating theatre into which specialised X-ray equipment has been installed.

What happens during a Percutaneous Liver Biopsy?

You will be asked to get undressed and put on a hospital gown. A small cannula (thin tube) will be placed into a vein in your arm. This means that we can give you any required medicines during the procedure, if you need it. The procedure is performed using local anaesthetic.

The skin on the right side of the abdomen will be cleaned and covered with sterile drapes. The skin will be numbed with local anaesthetic. Once the skin is numb, guided by using an ultrasound machine a biopsy needle is inserted accurately into the liver. Usually, two to three biopsy specimens are taken. The samples are then sent to the laboratory for microscopic examination. The wound site is cleaned and a dressing applied.

Will it hurt?

When the local anaesthetic is injected, it will sting and burn for a few seconds, but this soon wears off and numbs the area. The biopsy needle will then be inserted into the liver. It will make a click sound and you may feel a sharp pinch inside the abdomen as the biopsy is taken but this will last only for 1-2 seconds.

How long will it take?

Every patient is different, and it is not always easy to predict; however, expect to be in the radiology department for 1 hour

Pregnancy

If you are, or think you could be pregnant, please contact us prior to your appointment on the phone number in your appointment letter.

What happens afterwards?

You will be taken back to your ward on a trolley. Nurses on the ward will carry out routine observations, such as taking your pulse and blood pressure, to make sure that there are no problems.

Normal recovery time is approx. six hours, 2 hours required flat bed rest, 3 hours sitting up in bed and 1 hour mobilising on the ward. Assuming you are feeling well after recovery you will normally be discharged the same day. You will need a responsible adult to take you home by car or taxi. We do not recommend that you use public transport as it is unsafe if you feel unwell

How will I get my results?

The biopsy specimens will be sent for examination. Once the results are available, your doctors will discuss these with you.

If I am a day patient, what do I need to do after I go home?

You should rest for the remainder of the day and possibly for the next day, depending on your recovery.

- Have someone to stay with you overnight.
- Eat and drink normally.
- Take your usual pain relief, as prescribed, if you have any pain.
- Continue with your normal medication as prescribed.
- Keep a regular check on the biopsy site.
- Wait at least 24 hours before taking a shower or 48 hours before taking a bath.

Please rest at home for a minimum of 24 hours. Do not go to work or school on the day after the procedure. Always follow the advice and instructions that the doctors and nurses have given you.

If you feel you need urgent medical attention or are worried about anything outside of our normal opening hours, please contact your GP, NHS Direct/111 or go to your nearest accident and emergency (A&E) department.

Finally

The pictures taken during the examination are studied carefully and a detailed report is produced. The results will be sent to the person who referred you for the test. They will discuss the results with you and any treatment you may need.

You may already have an appointment with the team who referred you. If not, please contact them to arrange one to discuss the results of this test.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to call the Radiology department via the number given on your appointment letter.

As this is a teaching hospital there may be students and observers present during your examination as part of their ongoing training. Please let the staff know if you do not wish any students to be present during your attendance.

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