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United Lincolnshire
Hospitals
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Ultrasound Guided Percutaneous Biopsy

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Aim of the leaflet

This leaflet aims to inform you what an ultrasound guided biopsy is and what to expect during and after the procedure. It explains what is involved and the possible risks. It is not meant to replace informed discussion between you and your doctor/other healthcare professional but it can act as a starting point for discussion. If you have any questions about the procedure please ask the doctor who has referred you for the test or the Radiology department where the test will be performed.

What is an ultrasound guided biopsy?

A biopsy is a procedure aiming to take a tissue sample with a special needle. It allows a sample of tissue to be sent to a laboratory to be assessed under a microscope. This allows a diagnosis to be made and a treatment plan to be decided.

What are the benefits?

Often the doctors looking after you are unsure of what is causing your symptoms or need more information. This maybe as a result of other examinations you have had such as blood tests or other imaging techniques such as CT (Computed Tomography) or MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging). They have recommended that you have a biopsy to find out what is causing your symptoms e.g. why there is a lump present. This will help them decide on the most suitable treatment for you.

Are there any risks?

An ultrasound guided biopsy is considered a very safe procedure, but as with all medical procedures there are some risks and some complications that may arise.

There is a small risk of bruising which develops into a haematoma (a larger collection of blood). As with all puncturing of the skin there is also a small risk of infection, but all necessary precautions are taken to prevent this. There is also a small risk of damage to some of the surrounding tissue or organs but this is minimal to the fact the needle can be tracked by imaging.

Unfortunately, some biopsies fail to give an answer. Despite taking every possible care, sometimes the sample obtained is part of the normal tissue rather than the abnormal tissue. Alternatively abnormal tissue has been obtained but it may not be enough for the Pathologist (an expert in making diagnoses from tissue samples) to make a definite diagnosis.

If there are any specific risks which are pertinent to your particular case, this will be discussed with you prior to proceeding with the test.

What should I do to prepare for the procedure?

If you are taking any anticoagulant or antiplatelet medication (medication used to thin the blood such as Warfarin, Clopidogrel, Rivaroxaban etc) please contact the xray appointments desk (see contacts). Unless we have told you otherwise, continue to take your regular medication as usual.

What does the procedure involve?

When your biopsy procedure is due to start, a member of staff will show you to the scan room where you will meet the Practitioner who will perform the test and the Interventional Radiology team.

An ultrasound of the area in question will take place prior to the biopsy.

They will explain the procedure, how it will be performed and the risks involved. You will then be asked to sign a consent form to give your permission for the biopsy to go ahead.

The area for biopsy will be cleaned. You will then be given an injection in order to administer some local anaesthetic to numb the area prior to the biopsy. A small cut to the skin is often required in order to insert the biopsy needle. The biopsy will then be taken.

The whole procedure takes approximately 30 minutes.

Will it hurt?

You will feel a minor scratch from the administration of the local anaesthetic and possibly some minor discomfort as the biopsy takes place.

Am I allowed someone in with me?

It is often advisable that you have someone attend the appointment with you, however, they will be unable to accompany you into the scan/interventional room. You will be fully supported by a trained chaperone who will ensure your wellbeing throughout the procedure.

What happens after the procedure?

You will be asked to stay in the department for 20 to 30 minutes following the biopsy. You will be given follow up instructions before leaving on care of the biopsy site and how you will receive your results. **Specimen results can take up to 7 to 10 days.**

If you have any difficulty in breathing or have obvious signs of local infection (such as red, hot, very sore skin) in the week after your biopsy please contact your own Doctor (GP) or attend your local Accident and Emergency Department.

The Trust endeavours to ensure that the information given here is accurate and impartial.

If you require this information in another language, large print, audio (CD or tape) or braille, please e-mail the Patient Information team at patient.information@ulh.nhs.uk