

About Liver Biopsy

During a liver biopsy, your doctor puts a small needle through your skin and into your liver.

- Your doctor will do an ultrasound or CT (computed tomography) scan of your lower chest and upper abdominal area to help find the best site for your biopsy.
- A small sample of liver tissue is removed.
- The sample is sent to a lab where it is tested for disease.

What should I do before my procedure?

Have any blood tests that your doctor orders.

Tell your doctor about any medicines you are taking. It is important for your doctor to know if you are taking any blood-thinning medicines or have a bleeding disorder.

You may need to stop taking all or some medicine before the procedure. This includes:

- all prescription medicines
- blood-thinning medicines (anticoagulants)
- over-the-counter medicines such as aspirin or ibuprofen
- street drugs
- herbs, vitamins, and other supplements.

Follow any directions you're given for not eating or drinking before the procedure.

Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, may be pregnant, are breastfeeding, are allergic to any medicines, smoke, or drink alcohol regularly.

What happens the day of my procedure?

Before your procedure begins:

- You will change into a hospital gown. You will lie on your back or your left side. Part of your body is draped.
- Your doctor will check your blood pressure, pulse, breathing, and temperature.
- Your doctor may give you medicine through an IV (intravenous) line to help you relax.
- You will get medicine on your skin around the biopsy site to numb it.

What happens during my procedure?

- Your doctor will put a small needle through a tiny cut (incision) in your abdominal wall into the liver.
- Your doctor will take out a small sample of liver tissue. While this is done you will be told to hold your breath. The needle is taken out.
- You will have a bandage placed over your incision site. Your doctor may ask you to lie for a while on your right side. A pillow or special sandbag may be used to put pressure on the incision site.
- You will be watched for a few hours after your biopsy. You can then go home if you have no pain or signs of bleeding.

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Can I drive home after the procedure?

- No, you cannot drive. You must have an adult family member or friend drive you home. The medicine you received may not be totally gone from your body for 24 hours.
- **Do not** drive a car, operate machinery, make any important decisions, or drink any alcoholic beverages for 24 hours following your procedure.

Are there any medicines I should not take?

- **Do not** take aspirin, Motrin (ibuprofen), Aleve (naproxen), or medicines containing ibuprofen or naproxen for 24 hours.
- **Do not** take any other blood thinning medicines for 24 hours.
- You can take Tylenol if you have any pain. You may have some pain near the biopsy site or in your right shoulder.
- Check with your primary care doctor about how you should continue to take your prescribed medicines.

How do I take care of myself?

- It is a good idea if a friend or family member can stay with you for the rest of the day and overnight. That's for your protection and safety.
- When you get home, rest. You should limit your activity for the next 3 days.
- You can remove the bandage on your biopsy site the day after your procedure.
- Don't lift anything over 5 to 10 pounds (the weight of a gallon of milk) for 3 days.

- You can shower the day after your procedure. But don't soak in the tub for 3 days.
- You can eat today. Eat light, low fat foods.

Who should I call if I have problems after my procedure?

- Monday through Friday, 7 am to 5 pm: Radiology Resident on call at 615-343-2400.
- After hours or on weekends: Radiology Resident on call at 615-343-7185.

How do I know if I am having problems?

You should call the Radiology Resident if you have:

- temperature more than 101° F (38.3° C)
- bleeding from incision site
- severe pain in area of biopsy
- severe chest or stomach pain
- weakness or dizziness
- shortness of breath
- rectal bleeding
- swollen abdomen.

If your symptoms are severe, you should call 911 or go to the nearest Emergency Room.

How will I find out my test results?

You should contact the doctor who ordered your procedure. The doctor should have the results of your procedure in 24 to 48 hours.