

Is a liver biopsy painful?

About 1 in 5 patients will experience some pain from having a liver biopsy. It is very unusual for the pain to be severe enough to stop them from going home on the same day. Simple pain relieving tablets are usually adequate to make things comfortable. Some soreness may persist for up to a week.

It is sensible to avoid strenuous activity for two days following the biopsy but most patients are fully recovered after this time.

Arranging transport home and care afterwards

If you have had a liver biopsy, we would recommend you do not drive home after the procedure, and that you are accompanied. Please ensure you have arranged transport home prior to the biopsy, and bring the contact details with you.

Contacting the hospital

If you are taking any of the medication listed below prior to your biopsy, please phone our liver nurse team on **01225 826471**, (Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm), and ask to speak to a nurse.

- Warfarin
- Phenindione
- Clopidogrel
- Dabigatran
- Rivaroxaban
- Apixaban
- Prasugrel

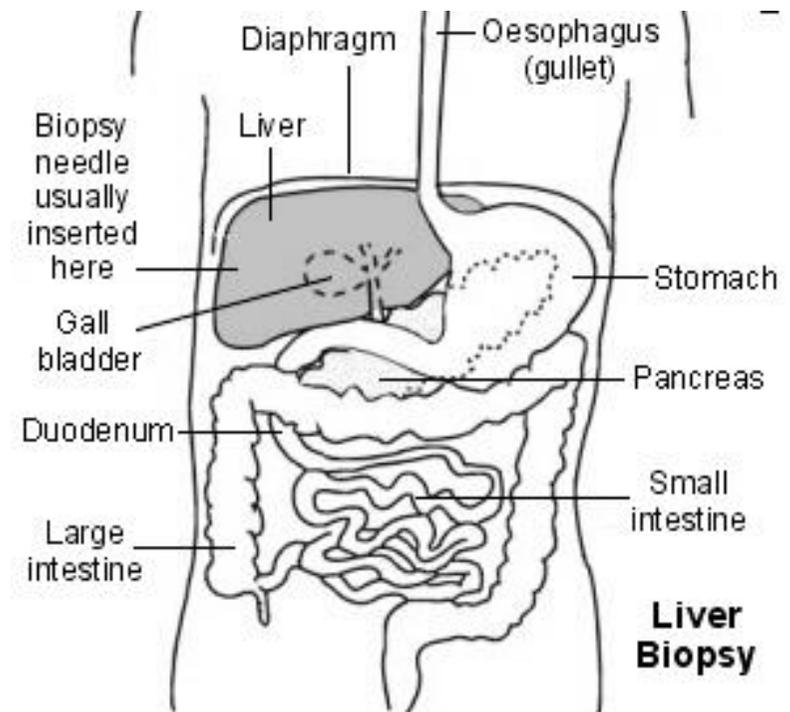
The radiology department can be contacted on **01225824381**.

Liver biopsy arrangements, including the provision of blood forms and appointment dates, are coordinated by the gastroenterology secretary Jenny Wedge, who can be contacted on **01225 824547**.

RUH

Ultrasound Guided Liver Biopsy

Your specialist has arranged for you to have a liver biopsy. We would be grateful if you read the information enclosed



What is a liver biopsy?

A liver biopsy is a procedure in which a small piece of the liver is removed in order that it can be examined under a microscope for signs of damage.

When is a liver biopsy performed?

(1) **Diagnosis**- a liver biopsy is performed when a liver problem is difficult to diagnose with blood tests and scan tests

(2) **Staging**- a liver biopsy is performed to gauge the degree of damage from a known liver condition. This can help to guide treatment.

How is a liver biopsy performed?

Liver biopsy is usually performed as a day case procedure in the radiology department.

A few days **before the procedure** the patient will be asked to have some blood tests to make sure that their blood is clotting normally and that it will be safe to take the biopsy. The patient might be asked to temporarily stop any medicines that affect blood clotting.

Prior to the procedure the person performing the biopsy will discuss the procedure with you. You may ask further questions about the procedure at this point. They will ask for your consent (agreement) to having the biopsy.

During the procedure the patient lies on their back with their right hand resting above their head. An ultrasound scan is used to get a picture of the liver and select the best site for the biopsy.

Local anaesthetic is injected into the skin at the site where the biopsy will be taken to make it numb. This will usually be in between or just below the lower ribs on the right side. The patient is asked to breathe out and hold their breath. A hollow needle is passed through the numbed area into the liver and the biopsy is taken. More than one sample may be needed.

After the biopsy the patient lies on their right side to put pressure on the liver and reduce any chance of bleeding. Their pulse and blood pressure will be monitored before being sent home. Usually you are monitored for four to six hours before you can go home; admission is rarely required for observation.

What are the risks of having a liver biopsy?

Liver biopsy is generally a very safe procedure but a small minority of patients may have complications

The risk of having excessive bleeding from the biopsy site is between 1 in 500 and 1 in 1,000. If bleeding occurs, a blood transfusion may be needed. To stop the bleeding the patient may have an x-ray guided procedure called embolisation in which the blood vessel causing the problem is sealed off. In some cases, surgery may be needed to stop the bleeding.

Other risks are much rarer and include puncture of other internal organs or infection. The risk of death as a consequence of a liver biopsy is between 1 in 10,000 and 1 in 12,000.

If you have any concerns after your biopsy you can contact your GP, or the hospital team.

When will my results be available?

This can vary, but typically it will take at least two weeks for the biopsy to be processed in the pathology laboratory and for a report to be sent to the doctor who arranged the procedure.