

# Lung Biopsy

## Information for patients

Your doctor has advised that you need a test called a lung biopsy. This leaflet explains a bit more about it.

## What is a lung biopsy?

A lung biopsy is a way of getting a sample of tissue from the lungs using a small needle. It helps us to find out what is wrong.

## Will I need a general anaesthetic?

No. A lung biopsy is done under a local anaesthetic – a small injection is used to numb the skin. You will remain awake throughout.

## What happens now?

You will receive a letter or phone call telling you when and where to report. The biopsy will usually be done within 2 weeks.

## Can I eat and drink before the test?

You may have a light breakfast before the test – some tea and toast for example.

## Do I take any medication on the day of the test?

Yes, generally. The doctor you saw in clinic will have checked your medication with you, please ask if you are to take them. You should not be taking warfarin, aspirin or certain diabetes medications. Please inform the doctor of any special needs you have that may need to be accommodated.

## Where will the biopsy take place?

In the X-ray department at Hillingdon Hospital. The doctor who performs the test is an x-ray specialist called a radiologist. The doctor will explain the procedure and any risks involved. If you have any questions please ask the doctor before you sign the consent form, which states that you agree to have the test.

## What happens next?

An x-ray, CT or ultrasound machine is used to let the doctor know exactly where to take the samples from. You will need to be very still during the procedure. The doctor then gives a local anaesthetic and passes a small needle into the relevant area in the lung and takes

some tiny samples of tissue. The samples are then sent to the laboratory and are examined under a microscope by a specialist called a pathologist to provide a diagnosis.

## Will it hurt?

The local anaesthetic stings for a few seconds. You may be aware of pressure from the biopsy needle but the procedure should not be painful at the time. Some people have a bit of pain afterwards once the anaesthetic has worn off. If you do have any pain you can take a painkiller like paracetamol (up to 2 tablets, 4 times a day).

## How long will it take?

Setting up for the procedure may take some time but the actual sample is taken while you hold your breath for a few seconds. The whole procedure will take 30-45 minutes.

## What happens afterwards?

You will be escorted back to the ward where you will rest for 4 hours and eat and drink normally. You would have a chest x-ray at 3-4 hours. If this is normal you would be allowed to go home. In case of any complications you may be asked to stay overnight under the care of the referring consultant. If the chest x-ray is normal most people are able to go home after a few hours but there must be someone to stay with you overnight. You may be admitted to hospital the day before. Please bring an overnight bag with you.

## Can I drive after the biopsy?

Someone else must drive you home after the test. You should be able to drive again the following day, if you're feeling well.

## When can I go back to work?

You should be able to go back to work the day after the lung biopsy unless advised otherwise.

## What are the risks of having a lung biopsy?

A CT guided needle biopsy is generally a safe procedure but as with any medical treatment there are a few risks or complications that can arise.

It is quite common for a little air to escape into the space around the lung during the biopsy. This may cause the lung to partially collapse. We call this a pneumothorax. Recent research shows this may happen in around 1 in 5 of procedures. Usually a pneumothorax is small, does not cause any problems and heals by itself within a few days. Rarely (in up to 3 out of 100 procedures) a lot of air leaks out and causes a big pneumothorax. If that were to happen we would treat it by either sucking the air out again with a needle (this is called an aspiration) or by putting in a tube to let the air out (the tube is called a chest drain). If this happens you would probably have to stay in hospital for a day or two.

It is quite a normal to cough up some streaks of blood at the time or for a day or two after the procedure. Very rarely a more significant bleed can occur, in which case you should contact the assessment unit at the hospital. Despite the possible complications needle biopsy is normally safe and is designed to save you having a major procedure.

### **Will there be any side effects after the biopsy?**

Most people will have no problems. If you suddenly become short of breath or have severe chest pain during the 24 hours after your biopsy it may mean that there has been an air leak (a pneumothorax). You should contact Hillingdon Hospital on 01895 238282 and ask for the medical registrar doctor on bleep 807 who will see you on the medical assessment unit at the hospital immediately and will arrange for you to have another x-ray.

### **When will I get the results?**

It can take up to a week for the results to come back to the doctor that referred you for the test. You should have been given an appointment to see the doctor again. If you have not heard from the hospital within 10 days of the biopsy you should telephone the consultants secretary to make another appointment.

### **Who should I contact if I have a problem or question?**

Please call 01895 279584 with any queries

### **Finally....**

Some of your questions should have been answered, please remember this is only a starting point for discussion about your treatment with the doctors looking after you.

**Make sure you are satisfied that you have received enough information about the procedure before you sign the consent form.**

### **Languages/ Alternative Formats**

Please ask if you require this information in other languages, large print or audio format.  
Please contact: 01895 279973

**Fadlan waydii haddii aad warbixintan ku rabto luqad ama hab kale. Fadlan la xidhiidh 01895 279 973**

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رابطہ کرو

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Jeżeli chciałbyś uzyskać te informacje w innym języku, w dużej czcionce lub w formacie audio, poproś pracownika oddziału o kontakt z biurem informacji pacjenta (patient information) pod numerem telefonu: 01895 279973.

如果你需要這些資料的其他語言版本、大字体、或音頻格式，請致電01895 279 973 查詢。

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