CT Guided Lung Biopsy

Information for patients undergoing a CT Guided Lung Biopsy

Introduction

This leaflet tells you about the procedure known as ‘Percutaneous lung biopsy’. It explains what is involved and what the possible risks are.

What is ‘Percutaneous Lung biopsy’?

‘Percutaneous’ means ‘through the skin’.

A ‘biopsy’ is the method of taking a small piece of tissue out of the body, using only a tiny incision and a special needle. A Pathologist, an expert in examining tissue samples, can then look at it under a microscope.

Why do I need a Lung biopsy?

You may have had an x-ray, ultrasound scan, MRI or a CT scan which will have shown that there is an area of abnormal tissue within your lung or the surrounding tissues. It is not always possible to determine the cause of these abnormalities on scans alone. The simplest way to make a diagnosis is to take a tissue sample for a Pathologist to examine.

Who has made the decision?

The Consultant in charge of your case and the Radiologist performing the biopsy will have discussed your case and feel this is the best way of making the diagnosis and planning your treatment. You will also have the opportunity to ask questions, and if, after discussion with your doctors, you do not want the procedure carried out, then you can decide against it.

Who will be performing the lung biopsy?

A doctor called a Radiologist who has been specially trained in using x-ray and scanning equipment to place the biopsy needle accurately into the abnormal tissue will perform the biopsy.
Where will the biopsy take place?
In the x-ray department in the CT scanning room.

Is there any preparation?
Your referring consultant should have advised you to Stop taking Aspirin, Clopidogrel and Warfarin before the biopsy, even if you are normally prescribed them. These types of drugs effect blood clotting and you will require a blood test prior to the biopsy.

Please contact the Radiology Nurses for further advice if you have NOT been instructed to do so.

Let your doctor know if you have any allergies. If you have previously reacted to intravenous contrast medium, the dye used for kidney x-rays and CT scanning, then you must tell us.

Special instructions before the procedure
You may have a light meal four hours before the procedure and drink clear fluids up to two hours before the procedure.

Clear fluids = water, clear squash/apple juice, black tea or black coffee, clear herbal teas.

You should continue to take your regular medication as usual; EXCEPT warfarin, aspirin and Clopidogrel. If you have stopped drinking prior to the biopsy you should take your medication with sips of water.

What happens during the biopsy?
A nurse will take your details and attach a monitor so she can record your blood pressure, pulse etc. You will be asked to change into an x-ray gown. The Radiologist will explain the procedure to you before asking you to sign the consent form.

You will be asked to lie on an x-ray table. We will then scan you to find the best position for you to lie in. The Radiologist will clean the skin with antiseptic to help avoid infection. We will keep everything as sterile as possible; you may have part of your body covered with a sterile towel. The skin and deeper tissues will be anaesthetised with a local anaesthetic; this will sting briefly before the tissues go numb. The Radiologist will make a tiny cut, and then insert the biopsy needle. We will continue to scan you to ensure that we have achieved the best position before taking some samples of the abnormal tissue. A small plaster will be placed over the biopsy site at the end.

How long will it take?
Every patient’s situation is different, and it is not always easy to predict how difficult the procedure will be. The biopsy may take about 30 minutes.
Will it hurt?

You will feel stinging as the local anaesthetic is given and then pressure on the skin as the biopsy needle is inserted. After the biopsy it is common to experience some pain at the biopsy site. You will be offered oral painkillers for this. Rarely the pain requires an injection of painkillers. There will be a nurse, or another member of staff, standing next to you and looking after you.

What happens afterwards?

You will be taken to your ward on a bed or trolley. Nursing staff will monitor your blood pressure, pulse, wound site etc. You will generally stay in bed for a few hours, until you have recovered.

If you are well enough you may be allowed home later that day, or you may need to stay overnight.

You must:

- Have a responsible adult to collect you, as you cannot drive home or travel on public transport.
- Have someone to stay with you for the first night just in case your wound bleeds or you feel unwell.
- Have access to a telephone.

After care advice:

- The next day you may have a bath or shower, removing any plasters
- Refrain from work, exercise or heavy lifting for TWO days following your biopsy

Please contact your GP (home doctor) if:

- There is any unusual redness, swelling or bleeding at the biopsy site
- Your temperature is 38°C (100.4 F) or greater
- You experience difficulty in breathing
- You start to bring up blood whilst coughing
- You experience pain that is not relieved with paracetamol.

Follow up

You will not get the results of your biopsy before you leave, as it takes a few days to do all the necessary tests on the biopsy specimen. Your referring consultant or a member of their team will see you in clinic approximately two to four weeks after the procedure.

What are the risks and complications?

Normally a Percutaneous lung biopsy is a safe procedure, but there are some risks and complications, which can arise, as with any medical treatment.
There is usually very little bleeding, which stops quickly. Bleeding internally into the lung can occur and may result in you coughing up blood stained sputum. It is possible that air can get into the space around the lung. This generally does not cause any real problems, but if it causes the lung to collapse and make you short of breath, then the air will need to be drained, either with small needle or drainage tube.

The most usual complication is pain after the procedure as described earlier, which may take several hours to settle.

Occasionally, despite taking every possible care, the piece of tissue obtained is not from the affected area, or it may not be enough for the Pathologist to make a definite diagnosis. In these cases it may be necessary to do another biopsy.

**Consent**

Informed consent will be obtained prior to the procedure. Staff will explain all the risks, benefits and alternatives before asking you to sign a consent form. If you are unsure about any aspect of the treatment proposed, please do not hesitate to speak with a senior member of staff.

**Finally**

We hope that you have found this leaflet useful. If you have any questions or you are worried about anything, please contact your family doctor (GP) or:

- Radiology Sister – 01305 255276

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

You can also contact NHS direct 24 hours a day on 0845 46 47 or [www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)

If you have any concerns or issues about the treatment which have not been answered by the Radiology Department, please contact our Patient Advice Liaison Service (PALS) on free phone 0800 7838058 or [pals@dchft.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@dchft.nhs.uk)

Dorset County Hospital
Williams Avenue
Dorchester
Dorset
DT1 2JY

Switchboard: 01305 251150
Fax: 01305 254155
Minicom: 01305 254444

E-mail: [headquarters@dchft.nhs.uk](mailto:headquarters@dchft.nhs.uk)
Website: [www.dchft.nhs.uk](http://www.dchft.nhs.uk)
Information Booklet:  
CT Guided Lung Biopsy

Getting feedback from our patients is important. Your answers can help us to monitor information we give you, to ensure it meets a high and consistent standard at all times.

Could you please take a few moments to complete this form, all responses are in confidence. Thanks you - your time is very much appreciated.

Did you find this booklet useful?  
[ ] Yes  [ ] No

Did it contain the type of information you wanted?  
[ ] Yes  [ ] No

Would you have liked more or less information?  
[ ] Yes  [ ] No

Is there anything else you would like to know?  
[ ] Yes  [ ] No

If yes, please tell us:  

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Your comments:  

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Please return this completed form to:

Radiology Sister  
Diagnostic Imaging  
Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust  
Williams Avenue  
Dorchester  
Dorset  
DT1 2JY