

## Information for Patients having an Overnight Stay following Liver Biopsy

This information sheet is being sent to you because it has been recommended that you undergo a procedure called liver biopsy. During this procedure a small piece of liver tissue is removed from the liver and is then sent to be analysed under a microscope. This is often the best way to investigate liver problems.

### Before you come into hospital for the liver biopsy

Please read this information sheet carefully. If there are any further questions you would like to ask about the procedure before coming into hospital, you could contact any of the following:

1. Liver Specialist Nurses at the hospital who deal with patients with liver diseases. Tel: 01603 288 846.
2. The medical secretary of your hospital consultant via the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital switchboard. Tel: 01603 286 286.
3. Your GP.

You will receive confirmation of the date of admission for liver biopsy from the bookings team. On the day of admission you will be asked to attend the Aylsham Medical Day Unit. Before your biopsy the staff on the unit will complete necessary pre-procedure checks (e.g. blood tests, check sheet and basic observations such as pulse, blood pressure and temperature).

You will be asked to have a Covid swab prior to the procedure and isolate after the swab is done (more information on this will be sent with your letter). Please note that government guidelines in relation to Covid are changing regularly, and this advice may change. Please follow the guidance from the booking team for the most up to date information.

**You will need to fast 4 hours before your allocated procedure time (you may have sips of water up until 2 hours before).**

As you are requiring an overnight stay, a bed will be allocated to you on the day. This will ideally be on one of our gastroenterology wards, however, due to bed pressures you may not find out which ward you will be on until after the procedure.

Please let either, your consultant secretary or the liver specialists, know if you are currently taking any antiplatelet medications such as Daltaparin, Clopidogrel, Warfarin, Apixaban, Dabigatran, Edoxiban, Rivaroxiban or any other platelet thinning medications. You may be asked to stop taking this 5-7 days prior to the procedure, or you may be switched onto a different medication temporarily. However, this MUST be decided by a qualified health care professional; what is safest for you in regards to your reason for taking this medication.

## **How is a liver biopsy done?**

A liver biopsy is performed using a needle inserted through the skin between the lower ribs on the right hand side of the body. Local anaesthetic is injected into the skin and muscles lying over the liver. The anaesthetic stings for a few seconds before the area goes numb. It is possible to be lightly sedated before the procedure if you are particularly anxious, but this is very rarely necessary.

You will be asked to hold your breath for a few seconds during which time the needle is inserted into the liver and removed. Sometimes it is necessary to repeat the procedure once or twice more in order to obtain enough liver tissue for analysis.

## **What are the complications of liver biopsy?**

In the vast majority of patients liver biopsy is a simple and safe procedure, although rarely complications may occur.

As the liver contains many blood vessels, the main risk is bleeding. Usually this simply results in a bruise around the liver but occasionally (1 in 500 cases) there can be more serious bleeding needing a blood transfusion (Severe bleeding occurs in 1 in 2,500-10,000 cases). Very rarely an operation is required. Bleeding into the bile ducts draining the liver occurs in 1 in 2000 cases.

Extremely rarely (1 in 1000 – 1 in 10 000 procedures), the liver is missed and tissue from another adjacent organ is taken, for example lung, intestine, kidney or gall bladder. Fortunately this does not usually cause any serious problems. The risk of death after liver biopsy is extremely low (1 – 4 in 10 000 cases).

## **What happens after the liver biopsy?**

After the biopsy you will be asked to lie in bed for 6 hours. During this time the nurse will be measuring your pulse and blood pressure at frequent intervals. After this you may be kept under observation overnight, but you will not be confined to the bed. If there have been no complications, you will be discharged home the morning after your biopsy.

## **How will I get the results of my liver biopsy?**

The results of the biopsy usually take at least 3 weeks to be processed and reported, however at times the wait time may be longer. Your consultant will then either write to you with the result or arrange an outpatient appointment to discuss the results in detail.

## **How can you help us?**

We are constantly trying to improve our procedures for patients. We would be grateful for any comments or suggestions on how to improve on your experience of having a liver biopsy at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. Please address any comments to your consultant or Dr Martin Phillips.

