

Having a biopsy in the Interventional Radiology (IR) department

Welcome to the Interventional Radiology department! This information leaflet will explain what a biopsy is and why you have been sent for one. Please read this leaflet carefully.

If you have any questions or concerns not answered by this leaflet, please contact the Interventional Radiology (IR) department on 020 7188 5525 (for Guy's Hospital) or 020 7188 5477 (for St Thomas' Hospital).

What is a biopsy?

A biopsy is a minor procedure carried out to get a small tissue sample. This will be sent to the lab for testing to confirm a diagnosis. Most patients go home a few hours after their procedure. Your doctor will explain to you what they want to be biopsied and why.

You won't get the biopsy results on the same day as your procedure – because your biopsy sample will take several days to process in the lab. You will be called back to clinic with your hospital doctor to talk to you about your biopsy results.

Who are Interventional Radiology?

Interventional radiologists (IR) are specialised doctors who perform procedures all over the body. Interventional radiologists use different imaging machines, such as ultrasound or CT to show them exactly where to go inside the body. Using ultrasound or CT avoids the need for surgical incisions. Ultrasound or CT guided biopsies are also very safe, as important structures can be clearly seen in real time.

Interventional radiology doctors work in a team along with IR specialist nurses and radiographers. The whole team will look after you during your biopsy and recovery.

Before your biopsy

We will arrange for you to have some simple blood tests. The doctor needs to see a list of all of your medications (tablets, inhalers, creams), so please bring a copy of your current prescription with you.

Sometimes, certain medicines need to be stopped before your procedure. The IR doctor or nurse will be able to advise you whether you need to stop any medicines. These medicines can be restarted after the biopsy – but the IR doctor or nurse will advise you on this.

What happens on the day of the biopsy?

- Do not eat or drink anything (except water) for six hours before the procedure. You can drink water up to two hours before the procedure. Eating and drinking before your procedure will cause delays to your procedure.
- Please arrive 45 minutes before your appointment time to allow sufficient time for preparation. You will need to get changed into a hospital gown and the IR doctor will go through your medications again with you.
- You will be asked to sign a hospital consent form, agreeing to have the procedure. You can ask any questions that you have.
- At least one family member or friend (maximum of two please) should accompany you to the hospital and they should be able to keep an eye on you for 24 hours afterwards.
- If you come to hospital with family or friends, they can wait with you before and after the procedure. No family or friends can be with you for the biopsy procedure, but you will be with the IR nurses and doctors at all times.

Consent - asking for your consent

We want to involve you in decisions about your care and treatment. If you decide to go ahead, you will be asked to sign a consent form. This states that you agree to have the treatment and you understand what it involves.

If you would like more information about our consent process, please speak to a member of staff caring for you.

What happens during the biopsy?

- You will be taken into the procedure room by the nurse. At least two nurses and a doctor will be with you at all times.
- The biopsy procedure is usually performed under local anaesthetic only (i.e. you are awake, but will only feel minimal pain).
- The doctor will position you to make the biopsy as easy as possible. The nurses will check your blood pressure and pulse throughout the procedure and make sure that you are comfortable.
- The biopsy is performed with a special needle. You will get a small dressing over the biopsy site afterwards. No stitches are required.
- A biopsy procedure is very quick, but the whole procedure will take around 30 minutes due safety checks and preparation.

What happens after your biopsy?

- You will usually need to stay in hospital for two to four hours after the procedure for us to observe you. The IR nurse will let you know when you can eat and drink after your biopsy.
- If all your checks are normal, most patients can go home the same day as their biopsy.
- You will need a responsible adult to take you home by car or taxi. We do not recommend using public transport, in case you feel unwell. If you need to arrange hospital transport, please call **020 7188 2888**.
- We recommend that you have an adult stay with you overnight.

- Do not drive for 24 hours after the procedure and not until you feel safe to drive.
- Avoid any strenuous exercise or lifting for 48 hours after the procedure.
- Simple painkillers (like paracetamol) might be useful for any post-biopsy discomfort.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Interventional Radiology Department on **020 7188 5573** at Guy's or **020 7188 5477** at St Thomas', Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

t: 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch:

t: 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 111

NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

w: www.nhs.uk

Get involved and have your say: become a member of the Trust

Members of Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust contribute to the organisation on a voluntary basis. We count on them for feedback, local knowledge and support. Membership is free and it is up to you how much you get involved. To find out more, and to become a member:

t: 0800 731 0319 **e:** members@gstt.nhs.uk **w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership

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