

Having a fibroscan

This information sheet has been given to you to explain what a fibroscan involves and why it is being recommended for you. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to a nurse or doctor caring for you.

What is a fibroscan and why do I need it?

A fibroscan is a type of ultrasound that can measure the degree of inflammation in your liver. It is a simple, painless test that uses high frequency sound waves.

Your doctor recommended that you have this test to help us understand the condition of your liver.

What are the benefits of this scan?

Having a fibroscan will help your doctor to understand how much scarring is in your liver. This will help him/her to plan your treatment.

A fibroscan is a quick, painless test that gives immediate results. It does not have any potential complications or risks and is non-invasive, which means that it does not break the skin or enter your body.

Are there any alternatives to a fibroscan?

Your doctor or nurse will explain any alternatives available to you in detail.

One option is to have a liver biopsy. This is where a small sample of liver tissue is removed with a needle. A liver biopsy has several disadvantages: for example, you need to stay in hospital for several hours after the procedure. It also carries several risks, such as internal bleeding after the biopsy. For further information on this procedure, please ask for the leaflet **Having a liver biopsy**.

Are there any special precautions?

You cannot have a fibroscan if you are pregnant or have an implantable device, such as a pacemaker or defibrillator. Please speak to your doctor or nurse if you think this applies to you.

What do I need to do to prepare for the scan?

Please do not eat or drink anything for two hours before your fibroscan. If you need to, you can take small sips of water or clear fluid, but avoid drinking large amounts of fluid. You should continue taking any prescribed medication.

You will not need to remove any clothing for the scan, but we will need to expose the right side of your abdomen (tummy). Therefore, we do not recommend that women wear a dress on the day of their test. You will not need to remove any jewellery near the site of the scan, such as a belly button piercing.

What happens before the fibroscan?

You will need to book in with the receptionist and then take a seat in the waiting area. A nurse will call you into one of the consulting rooms, where you will be able to ask any questions you have about the fibroscan. Once you have discussed the scan, providing you are happy to go ahead, you will have the test.

What happens during the scan?

You will be asked to lie on an examination couch and place your right arm above your head. The nurse will feel your abdomen to find the right place to perform the scan. He/she will place a probe on your abdomen and trigger the probe to start. The sound waves will be sent out from the probe in pulses. They will pass through your skin to your liver and bounce back. This will feel like a gentle flick against the side of your skin – it should not hurt.

The scanner measures the time it takes for the sound wave to bounce back. We will repeat this at least 10 times to make sure we get an accurate result. The mean (average) reading is then calculated by the scanner, which will show your doctor your liver stiffness.

The scan should take between 10 and 20 minutes to perform.

What happens after the scan?

As soon as the fibroscan is finished you will be able to either go home or return to work.

When will I get the result?

The result will be sent to the doctor who referred you for the fibroscan and he/she will discuss it with you at your next outpatient appointment.

Appointments at King's

We have teamed up with King's College Hospital in a partnership known as King's Health Partners Academic Health Sciences Centre. We are working together to give our patients the best possible care, so you might find we invite you for appointments at King's. To make sure everyone you meet always has the most up-to-date information about your health, we may share information about you between the hospitals.

Contact us

Please contact the **hepatitis nurse specialists** on **020 7188 2175** Monday to Friday 8am to 4pm if you have any questions or concerns.

Pharmacy medicines helpline

For information about any medicines that you have been prescribed at Guy's and St Thomas' hospitals, you can speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

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

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

To make comments or raise concerns about the Trust's services, please contact PALS. Ask a member of staff to direct you to the PALS office or:

e: 020 7188 8801 at St Thomas' **t:** 020 7188 8803 at Guy's **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

Knowledge & Information Centre (KIC)

For more information about health conditions, support groups and local services, or to search the internet and send emails, please visit the KIC on the Ground Floor, North Wing, St Thomas' Hospital.

t: 020 7188 3416

Language support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch using the following contact details.

t: 020 7188 8815 **fax:** 020 7188 5953

NHS Direct

Offers health information and advice from specially trained nurses over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 0845 4647 **w:** www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

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

Become a member of your local hospitals, and help shape our future

Membership is free and it is completely up to you how much you get involved. To become a member of our Foundation Trust, you need to be 18 years of age or over, live in Lambeth, Southwark, Lewisham, Wandsworth or Westminster or have been a patient at either hospital in the last five years. To join:

t: 0848 143 4017 **e:** members@gstt.nhs.uk **w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk

Leaflet number: 2056/VER3

Date published: June 2013

Review date: June 2016

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