

Transrectal ultrasound and biopsy

Introduction

This leaflet explains why you might require transrectal ultrasound scan and biopsy as part of treatment to deal with problems with the prostate gland in men. If there is anything you do not understand please speak to your doctor or nurse.

Please let us know if you have a holiday booked within a week of the biopsy appointment, especially if you are travelling outside the UK, so that we can reschedule your appointment.

What is a transrectal ultrasound and biopsy?

Your urologist (doctor specialising in the bladder, prostate, kidneys and urinary system) may need to take tissue samples for analysis (biopsy) from your prostate gland to help diagnose your condition, or identify the best course of treatment for you. A transrectal ultrasound scan helps the urologist see the prostate gland during the procedure.

Why do I need to have this done?

You may have had a blood test for the chemical marker, PSA (Prostate Specific Antigen – a protein produced by the prostate gland), which has been found to be higher than the level expected in a man of your age. The PSA test is used to try to detect any prostate cancer. However, a raised PSA test result may also be due to other causes, including an enlarged prostate due to ageing, a urine infection or a prostate infection.

You may also have had an examination of the prostate via your back passage and your prostate may have felt abnormal. This can sometimes indicate prostate cancer or may be due to relatively harmless conditions, such as infection or stones in the prostate.

What to do before the procedure

- **Do not eat any solid food for two hours before your appointment time. You can drink clear fluids (water, weak squash, black tea or coffee).**
- **You will be asked to come in one hour before your appointment as you will need to have some antibiotic medication prior to the procedure. This antibiotic needs to be given on an empty stomach, so it is important that you don't eat solid food for at least two hours beforehand.**

You may not feel like driving home after your appointment, so you should arrange for someone to take you home afterwards.

You will be asked to provide a urine sample on arrival to test for current urinary infections.

Let us know if you take any medication that thins the blood, such as Warfarin, Clopidogrel (Plavix) or Dipyridamole as we will need to ensure your blood is clotting effectively before the procedure.

What happens during the scan and biopsy?

The doctor will feel your prostate (through the back passage) with his finger, prior to inserting the transrectal ultrasound probe into your back passage. This is a small instrument that uses sound waves to produce an image of the prostate and may show abnormalities within the gland. You may find this part of the test slightly uncomfortable but it should not hurt.

A local anaesthetic is injected around the prostate to make the biopsies more comfortable. This will feel cold and sharp and will sting as it is injected but this discomfort soon passes. The probe is also used to guide the doctor as they take some small samples of tissue (known as a 'biopsy') from the prostate gland. You will have 10 biopsies taken from the prostate.

The whole procedure will take around 20 minutes to complete. You should expect to be in the department for about 1½ hours altogether.

What happens afterwards?

You may experience a small amount of bleeding from your back passage so you are given a pad to insert into your pants after the procedure. If this happens you will be asked to stay in the department for about 20 minutes in order to check on it, otherwise, you may go home straight away.

You may wish to take things easy for the rest of the day. Please drink plenty of water (at least 2 or 3 litres in 24 hours) for the rest of the day and for the next 2-3 days. This will help prevent infection.

Any pain or discomfort you experience after your procedure can be treated with simple painkillers, such as paracetamol.

Is there anything I need to watch out for at home?

After the scan, you may notice blood in your urine or from your back passage – this should clear within a few days. You may also notice blood in your semen, which may take several weeks to clear. This is normal. If the bleeding becomes heavy or severe, or if you are worried, please contact your GP or come to the Emergency Department (A&E) at the Royal Berkshire Hospital.

If you get any pain or burning when you pass urine, you may have a urine infection. You will need to see your GP for some extra antibiotics to get rid of this infection.

Important: If you become shivery, have a fever and feel generally unwell, please come straight away to the Emergency Department (A&E) at The Royal Berkshire Hospital, as you may need to be admitted for extra antibiotics given into your vein.

The scan and biopsies may cause slight inflammation of the prostate gland, making it difficult for you to pass urine. This should pass within a few days. If you are unable to pass any urine at all, please call your GP or come to the Emergency Department (A&E) as soon as possible.

Coming for your results

We will give you a date for your results on the day of your procedure. This appointment will be in Greenlands Outpatients, level 4 of the Eye Block, where you will be seen by one of the Urology Nurse Specialists. They will explain the results to you and you will discuss what happens next. It is always a good idea to bring someone with you as there can be a lot of information to remember. Depending on what your results are, there is a possibility you may need to have some further X-ray investigations. These may be organised for the Friday and the following Monday after your results clinic.

Contact details

If you have any other queries or concerns please do not hesitate to ask any of the staff either when you come for your treatment, or by telephoning us.

The Urology Procedures Department can be contacted for advice on weekdays between 8.30am – 4.30pm via the Urology Clinical Admin Team 0118 322 8629.

More information is available on the Trust website www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

This document can be made available in other languages and formats upon request.

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