

Having a CT guided biopsy of the abdomen

Introduction

You will need a blood test a few days before the procedure. If you have not had a recent blood test your consultant's secretary should be contacting you with the arrangements. If you have not received any information regarding your blood test 3 days before the scan appointment please telephone 0118 322 7935 to speak to one of the radiographers (X-ray technicians). If you wish to change your appointment please telephone 0118 322 7941.

You must have nothing to eat or drink for 4 hours prior to your appointment time.

Continue to take any medication which you have been prescribed. If you take any medication which thins your blood (e.g. Warfarin), you must contact the X-ray nurses on 0118 322 8368 as soon as possible to check whether these medications should be stopped.

Please arrive 30 minutes before your appointment (unless instructed otherwise).

Please bring with you: your appointment letter or your X-ray request card (if you have it).

You will usually be in the X-ray Department for about 4 hours but occasionally it is necessary to stay in the hospital overnight, so please come prepared with your overnight bag.

An HCA (health care assistant) will greet you in the CT waiting area and may accompany you during the exam. The examination is conducted by a consultant radiologist (specialist X-ray doctor). A relative or friend can accompany you to the department but will not be able to remain with you during the procedure. Please note, no childcare facilities are available.

It is essential that you arrange for someone to collect you after the procedure and stay with you for 24 hours as you will not be able to drive yourself home.

Prior to the scan

We will ask you to change into a hospital gown. The gowns are designed to open out so that we can reach the part of the body affected. The consultant radiologist will explain the procedure to you in full, answer any questions you have and then ask you to sign a consent form to gain your permission to proceed.

What is a CT guided biopsy of the abdomen and why do I need one?

You are having a CT guided biopsy because an examination or imaging (e.g. CT scan or ultrasound) which you have had previously has shown an abnormality. The radiologist will take a sample of tissue or fluid guided by the CT scanner. This sample will be analysed in the laboratory to help diagnose your problem.

CT stands for Computerised Tomography. It uses X-rays and a computer to create detailed images of the inside of your body. CT scans used to be known as CAT scans, which stands for Computerised Axial Tomography.

CT allows the consultant radiologist to take images of the inside of your body (like slices in a loaf of bread) and guide the biopsy needle precisely into the correct position.

Are there any risks with this test?

This procedure is designed to be as least invasive as possible. It is usually performed using local anaesthetic which is a small injection to numb the skin. This should mean that you will experience a 'pushing' sensation rather than pain.

Since a needle is being inserted into your body, it is possible that bleeding may occur. This is why we check (with a blood test) how well your blood is clotting prior to the procedure. Infection is another possibility as a result of the procedure but this is extremely rare. The procedure is performed under strict sterile conditions to minimise this risk.

The scanner uses ionising radiation (X-rays) to produce the pictures but scan modes and radiographer techniques are designed to make the exposure to the patient as low as possible.

What happens during the biopsy?

Depending on the location / position of the area of interest you will lie on the scanner table on your back, front or either side to allow best access. There will be either an HCA or trained nurse assisting the Consultant Radiologist during the procedure.

The table will be moved in and out of the scanner repeatedly during the procedure.

The Radiologist will take a sample of tissue or fluid, using the cross sectional images obtained by the CT scanner to locate and guide them to the correct area.

The procedure can take up to one hour.

After the CT scan

After the procedure you will need to stay in the X-ray department for a few observations. This will usually be about 4 hours but occasionally it is necessary to stay in the hospital overnight.

If you live on your own or have no one able to stay with you after the procedure please telephone 0118 322 7941 as it will be necessary to stay overnight on a ward in the hospital

Results

A report of your examination will usually be sent to your referring doctor; if this is a hospital specialist, then the specialist will contact your GP with the report.

Further information

www.nhs.uk/conditions/ct-scan/pages/introduction.aspx

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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