

Imaging department

Having an ultrasound guided muscle biopsy

Information for patients, relatives and carers

Introduction

This leaflet gives general information about an ultrasound guided muscle biopsy. It does not replace the need for personal advice from a healthcare professional. Please ask us if you have any questions

What is a muscle biopsy?

A muscle biopsy is a minor surgical procedure done under local anaesthetic where a small incision is made, and muscle tissue samples are removed. Commonly used muscles are the quadriceps at the front of the thigh, biceps or the deltoid in the upper arm.

Is there anything I need to do before my muscle biopsy?

For the six hours before your procedure, please do not eat or drink anything. There may be some medications you need to stop, and your doctor will let you know.

What are the risks and side effects of having a muscle biopsy?

The risks and side effects are minor. They include:

- **Pain:** This may last up to a week with discomfort and bruising around the biopsy site.
- **Bleeding:** There may be a small amount of bleeding from the wound site. Rarely, bleeding from deep within the muscle can cause a bruise.
- **Infection:** There is a small risk of infection any time your skin is cut or broken. If this happens, please call your doctor straight away.
- **Allergy:** reaction to the local anaesthetic and plaster dressing.
- **Scar:** You will have a scar, this will usually fade to a thin line, but in some people the scarring can be larger.
- **Nerve damage:** There is a small risk that a nerve may be damaged. This can lead to numbness or altered sensation and very rarely weakness.
- Very occasionally muscle biopsy can be unsuccessful when the muscle sample obtained is not suitable for analysis. This may be due to wastage of muscle, lack of muscle fibres in the sample or because the procedure to take the sample had to be abandoned due to safety reasons. This may mean that the biopsy will need to be repeated.

Are there any alternatives to a muscle biopsy?

It may be possible to have a surgical biopsy performed in theatres, depending on the muscle that has been identified as the best target. This usually entails a larger incision to get a larger sample.

What happens if I do not have the muscle biopsy?

Your doctor may not have all the information needed to make a diagnosis. This may affect the type of treatment he or she can suggest for you.

What will happen before the muscle biopsy?

Before the biopsy, your doctor will take a medical history, perform a physical examination and some blood tests may be taken. It is important to tell your doctor at this stage if you are on any of the medications listed below:

- Warfarin – the biopsy cannot be undertaken if you are on warfarin. Your doctor will need to discuss this with you.
- Heparin – Your doctor will need to discuss this with you.
- Clopidogrel (Plavix TM) / Prasugrel / Ticagrelor – this needs to be stopped at least 5 days prior to the biopsy and for 48 hours after the biopsy. The consultant will discuss this with you.
- Other oral anticoagulants previously known as NOACS. You will need to discuss this medication with the consultant in advance of your biopsy.
- Aspirin / Dipyridamole – You can continue to take this.

How is the biopsy performed?

You will be taken into a room and asked to lie on a bed. The clinician will clean the area needed for the biopsy. Local anaesthetic is given to numb the skin. A small cut is made in the skin with a scalpel and the biopsy needle is advanced using ultrasound guidance. Several samples will be taken.

What happens afterwards?

After the procedure, you will be observed and asked to lie on the site of the biopsy for 2 hours.

We recommend that you should arrange for someone to pick you up after the procedure rather than using public transport.

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

It is recommended that after having a muscle biopsy sample taken from the leg you must not drive and take care when climbing stairs for 24 - 48 hours after the procedure.

How do I get to the hospital?

Please visit the Trust's website for more information about travelling to our hospitals:

www.imperial.nhs.uk/our-locations

What if I cannot keep my appointment?

Please contact us as soon as possible. We can then offer this date to another patient and agree a new appointment date and time with you.

You will find the appropriate telephone number to call on your appointment letter.

Contact details

Please do not hesitate to contact our imaging departments if you have any queries or concerns:

- **Hammersmith Hospital: 020 3313 0077**
- **St Mary's Hospital: 020 3312 6418**
- **Charing Cross Hospital: 020 3313 0077**

How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3313 0088** (Charing Cross, Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte's & Chelsea hospitals), or **020 3312 7777** (St Mary's and Western Eye hospitals). You can also email PALS at imperial.pals@nhs.net The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street
London W2 1NY

Email: ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net

Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team:
imperial.communications@nhs.net

Wi-fi

Wi-fi is available at our Trust. For more information visit our website: www.imperial.nhs.uk