Superficial Lymph Node Biopsy

Interventional Radiology

This leaflet provides information about the procedure, what to expect on the day, the potential risks and important information for afterwards.

Prior to the procedure, you may have a pre-assessment or telephone consultation, where you will have the opportunity to ask further questions.

Please note that this leaflet is not meant to replace discussion between you and your doctor. You should raise any questions you may have with the doctor who has referred you or with the doctor who will be performing the procedure.

What is an ultrasound-guided Lymph Node biopsy?

A Lymph Node (LN) biopsy is a procedure used to take a small sample of tissue from a lymph node for examination under a microscope. Lymph nodes are small glands that form part of the immune system and are found throughout the body (for example, in the neck, armpits, chest, abdomen, or groin).

The biopsy helps doctors diagnose or monitor a range of medical conditions.

The procedure is usually performed using ultrasound to guide a needle accurately into the lymph node, allowing the tissue sample to be taken safely and precisely.

Why do I need a lymph node biopsy?

You may need a lymph node biopsy to:

- Investigate enlarged or abnormal lymph nodes
- Help diagnose infection, inflammation, or autoimmune conditions
- Diagnose or stage cancer (such as lymphoma or metastatic disease)
- Assess response to treatment
- Help guide further management and treatment decisions

Tel: 01932 723470 **Email:** asp-tr.ir-referrals@nhs.net

How do I prepare for a lymph node biopsy?

You will have a pre-assessment telephone consultation with a nurse before your admission and may be asked to have blood tests before the procedure.

You can usually eat and drink normally, unless you are advised otherwise.

As it's a day case procedure, you need to arrange for an adult to collect you from the department and someone to stay with you overnight.

The procedure will take place in the Interventional Radiology (IR), within the Radiology Department at St. Peter's Hospital. When you arrive, you will be given a hospital gown to change into.

The doctor will discuss the procedure with you; answer any questions you may have and ask you to sign the consent form if you are happy to proceed.

The procedure will likely be performed under local anaesthetic.

If you are feeling unwell closer to the day of the procedure, please let the team know.

How is a lymph node biopsy performed?

You will be positioned depending on the location of the lymph node (for example, lying on your back or side).

Ultrasound is used to identify the lymph node and plan a safe approach. The skin is cleaned with antiseptic solution and numbed using local anaesthetic. A small needle is then inserted through the skin into the lymph node under image guidance.

One or more tissue samples may be taken. You may be asked to keep still or briefly hold your breath while the samples are obtained.

The procedure usually takes 15-30 minutes.

After the biopsy, pressure is applied to the site, and a small dressing is placed.

What are the potential risks and complications of a lymph node biopsy?

A lymph node biopsy is a common and generally safe procedure. However, as with all medical procedures, there are some risks:

- **Pain or discomfort** - Mild pain or tenderness at the biopsy site is common and usually settles within a few days with simple pain relief.

- **Bleeding** - Minor bleeding or bruising can occur in up to **5%** of patients and usually settles without treatment. Significant bleeding is uncommon (<1%) and very rarely requires further treatment.

- **Bruising or haematoma** - A small collection of blood under the skin may occur and usually resolves on its own.

- **Infection** - Infection at the biopsy site is rare (<1%) but may require antibiotics if it occurs.

- **Injury to nearby structures** - Damage to nearby blood vessels, nerves, or organs is rare (<0.5%), as imaging guidance is used to minimise this risk.

What happens afterwards?

After the procedure:

- You will be monitored for a short period, up to 2h
- Most patients can go home the same day

You should:

- Keep the dressing clean and dry for **24 hours**
- Avoid strenuous activity or heavy lifting for **24-48 hours**
- Use simple pain relief if required (avoid anti-inflammatory medication unless advised)

When should I seek medical advice?

Seek urgent medical advice if you experience:

- Increasing pain, swelling, or redness at the biopsy site
- Persistent or heavy bleeding
- Fever or chills
- Shortness of breath (particularly after chest lymph node biopsy)

Follow-up

The biopsy sample will be sent to the laboratory for analysis. Results and follow-up arrangements will be discussed with you by your referring consultant or specialist team.

Further Information

We endeavour to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, in the first instance, raise these with the Matron, Senior Nurse or Manager on duty. If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Experience Team on 01932 723553 or email asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net. If you remain concerned, the team can also advise upon how to make a formal complaint.

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You can use Text Relay to turn telephone communications into text. Use the Relay UK app on your phone, tablet or PC. You can also use Relay UK via Minicom or Uniphone.

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اگر آپ اس کا اردو زبان میں ترجمہ چاہتے ہیں، تو براہ کرم اس فون نمبر 01932 723553 پر رابطہ کریں

Se precisa de uma tradução por favor contacte: 01932 723553

আপনার অনুবাদের দরকার হলে এখানে যোগাযোগ করুন : 01932 723553

यदि आपको अनुवाद की ज़रूरत है तो कृपया इस नंबर पर फोन करें: 01932 723553

Jeżeli chcemy, aby te informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić 01932 723553

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