

## Radiology Department

# Fluoroscopy Intervention: Transjugular Liver Biopsy

## Patient information leaflet

### Introduction

You have been advised by your hospital consultant that you need to have a transjugular liver biopsy. This information explains what is involved and what the possible risks are.

This leaflet may not answer all your questions, so if you have any concerns, please ask the ward staff.

If you feel unhappy with any part of your care within the X-ray Department please ask to speak to a senior member of staff.

Please read this leaflet carefully to ensure you are well prepared for the examination. Please contact the X-ray Department if your weight is equal to or more than 205Kg (32 stone) you may require an alternative examination.

### Points to remember

- Please bring to the X-ray Department any sprays or inhalers with you that you are taking
- We also ask you to leave any valuables on the ward.
- If you are taking **Aspirin** or **Warfarin** please inform the ward staff, as this medication may need to be stopped prior to the procedure.

### What is a transjugular liver biopsy?

A liver biopsy is a procedure that involves taking a tiny specimen of the liver for examination under a microscope. In most cases, a liver biopsy is taken through the skin by passing a fine needle through into the liver.

A transjugular liver biopsy is an alternative way of obtaining the liver specimen by passing the needle through the jugular vein in the neck. This method is used in patients who have abnormal clotting of the blood or fluid collecting in the abdomen. This technique is used to reduce the risk of bleeding after the biopsy.

### Why do I need a transjugular liver biopsy?

The doctors looking after you have decided that you need a liver biopsy to obtain more



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information about your liver problem. The information gained from the biopsy will help the doctors in the treatment of your condition.

### Referral and consent

Prior to the procedure you should have plenty of time to discuss the situation with your consultant and the radiologist (a specialised X-ray doctor) who will be performing the procedure. If after discussion with your hospital doctor or radiologist you do not want the procedure carried out, then you can decide against it.

If the radiologist feels that your condition has changed or that your symptoms do not indicate the procedure is necessary then they will explain this to you. They will discuss their reasons with the referring clinician and ask that you return to your referring clinician or ward for review. At all times the radiologist and referring clinician will be acting in your best interests.

### Before the test

Please bring all your usual medication into hospital with you. Please remember to take any sprays or inhalers with you when you have the procedure. It is important that you understand the test and its implications, so if you have any questions, please ask the doctor. You will be asked to sign a pink consent form confirming that you understand the procedure and are aware of the risks and benefits it entails. This may be done on the ward before you have the procedure. We will want you to be as relaxed as possible for the procedure. Take all medication as normal, but if you are taking **water tablets** or **diuretics** you **may stop** these **on the day of the procedure**.

Please tell the doctor if:

- You have had any allergies or bad reactions to drugs or other tests
- You have asthma, hay fever, or any heart or kidney problems
- You are diabetic

### Preparation

A transjugular liver biopsy is usually carried out under local anaesthetic.

- You will be asked not to eat **for Six hours before the procedure**, although you may still drink clear fluids such as water.
- You will need a cannula inserted into a vein in your arm after you have arrived on the ward, before coming to the X-ray department. This is so that you can be given antibiotics prior to the procedure and a sedative to relieve anxiety (this will be given in the x-ray room immediately before the procedure)
- If your blood clotting is abnormal, you may be given special blood transfusions to try and correct this. If you have any concerns about having blood transfusions, you should discuss these with your doctor.
- If you have any allergies or have previously had a reaction to the dye (contrast agent), you **must** tell the radiology staff before you have the test.
- You will need to wear a hospital gown. The porters will collect you from the ward and bring you to the x-ray department on your bed for the procedure.

### During your examination

- The procedure will be explained to you again by the radiologist and you will be able to ask any further questions that you may have.

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- You will be taken into the X-ray room where you will be asked to lie down on the X-ray table
- Your blood pressure and oxygen levels will be monitored by a radiology nurse who will stay with you throughout the procedure.
- The radiologist (an X-ray doctor) will clean the skin around your neck with a cold cleaning solution and then cover you with sterile drapes to keep the area very clean.
- The radiologist will inject a local anaesthetic into the skin of your neck to freeze the area. You may still feel some pressure sensation, but if you feel any pain during the procedure inform the radiologist. You will be asked to lie as still as you can.
- Once the skin is numb, a small tube (catheter) is inserted into the vein at the side of the neck.
- An X-ray machine is used to guide the catheter into the vein in the liver and then to guide the needle into the liver.

Usually, two to three biopsy specimens are taken.

### Risks of the procedure

As with any procedure or operation, complications are possible. These complications will be discussed with you before you sign the consent form.

Transjugular liver biopsy is a safe procedure, but as with any medical procedure there are some risks and complications that can arise. The overall risk of a problem requiring further treatment is low (1–2%).

- The main risk is bleeding after the biopsy. However, a transjugular liver biopsy has a lower risk of bleeding than a conventional liver biopsy taken through the side of the abdomen.
- You may get some bruising or soreness of your neck where the vein was punctured, this should resolve fairly quickly.
- Allergic reactions can occur with the X-ray dye, only very rarely requiring any treatment. You will be asked about allergies by the radiologist at the time.

Despite these possible complications, the procedure is normally very safe. At all times during and after the procedure the staff will be monitoring your responses to this treatment in order to minimise the effects of any complications.

X-rays are a type of radiation. We are all exposed to natural background radiation every day of our lives; this comes from the sun, food we eat, and the ground. Exposure to X-rays carries a small risk, but your doctor feels that this risk is outweighed by the benefits of having the test. We will take all safeguards to minimise the amount of X-rays you receive.

### Safety

Patients aged 12-55 years – could you be pregnant? The risks of radiation are slightly higher for the unborn child so you will be asked to confirm that you are not pregnant before the examination can proceed.

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## After your examination

If you have any problems after the procedure please speak to the staff on the ward.

- You will be taken back to the ward on your bed.
- Nurses on the ward will carry out routine checks of your blood pressure and pulse to ensure there are no problems.
- You will generally stay in bed for a few hours, until you have recovered. Assuming you are feeling well, you will normally be discharged the same day.

## How will I get my results?

The biopsy specimens will be sent for examination. Once the results are available, your doctors will discuss these with you.

## Other sources of information:

For general information about radiology departments visit the Royal College of Radiologists website: [www.goingfora.com](http://www.goingfora.com)

For information about the effects of X-rays read the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB) publication: "X-rays how safe are they?" on the Health Protection Agency website: [www.hpa.org.uk](http://www.hpa.org.uk)

Please note that the views expressed in these websites do not necessarily reflect the views of UHCW NHS Trust or the NHS.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact the number on your appointment letter and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy

## Document History

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