

Patient Information

General Surgery

Muscle, temporal artery and lymph node biopsy

You have been referred for a biopsy by the medical team (Rheumatology, Neurology or Haematology) caring for you. A biopsy will allow the team to find out more about your condition.

A biopsy is a procedure where a small tissue sample is taken and examined in the laboratory. The biopsy is carried out by a surgeon and is usually done as a day case procedure. You will be in hospital for a few hours and discharged home when the surgical team looking after you decide that it's safe to do so.

Why you need this procedure

The medical team think a tissue biopsy is needed to establish the best treatment plan for you. The tissue removed will be examined in the laboratory and the results will take from 7 days up to a month. The specialists will then consider the results and decide on the most suitable treatment plan for you.

Consent

You'll need to consent to this procedure once the risks and benefits are explained to you.



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Anticoagulants (blood thinning medication)

If you are on this type of medicine, it may need to be stopped for some time before the biopsy.

Tell your doctor or medical team as soon as possible before your biopsy **if you are taking any medicines which affect blood clotting**, such as warfarin, clopidogrel, aspirin, etc.

During the procedure

Most biopsies are carried out using a local anaesthetic. This is administered via an injection into the area to numb it. You may feel some pain for a few minutes until the area goes numb.

The tissue is taken and the incision will be closed with stitches. The length of the incision will vary from half an inch to two inches. You'll be told if the stitches need to be removed or if they'll dissolve (this usually takes about two weeks).

In a few cases, sedation or a general anaesthetic may be needed. We will discuss this with you. You may need to stay for longer on the ward, usually half a day, to recover so that it's safe to discharge you.

What to expect afterwards

- You will return to the ward to recover from the anaesthetic.
- You will be discharged when you are medically fit.
- You're advised to have a responsible adult take you home and stay with you for 24 hours after the procedure.
- You will receive instructions on how to have your stitches removed at your GP.
- You will also receive instructions on wound care before you leave hospital.
- Keep the wound dry for a few days.
- You will have some discomfort and pain from the wound. This can be treated with your usual painkillers - paracetamol, ibuprofen, codeine
- We'll inform your GP about the operation as well as advice on suture removal.

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Complications

Complications are rare but can include:

- Bleeding, bruising and wound haematoma
- Wound infection
- Numbness around the wound
- Scarring
- Collection of fluid under the skin (seroma formation)
- Leaking of fluid from the wound (lymph fistula)
- Prolonged pain in the wound

Please contact your GP if you experience any of these. If you think you need urgent care, go to your nearest A&E.

Results

The results are sent to the medical team who have requested the biopsy. You should have a follow-up appointment to discuss the results and treatment plan.

If you would like more information, please ask the medical team caring for you.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please ask and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke-free policy.

Document History	
Department:	General Surgery
Contact:	25265
Updated:	October 2024
Review:	October 2027
Version:	3
Reference:	HIC/LFT/1845/14

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