

Radiology department

Information about ultrasound-guided superficial biopsy

What is an ultrasound-guided superficial biopsy?

A biopsy is a procedure where a small piece of tissue is taken from the body. This can then be looked at under a microscope to tell what kind of cells are in the tissue.

Ultrasound uses sound waves to look at tissues inside the body. The radiologist (radiology doctor) doing the biopsy will use ultrasound to guide a needle into the right place to take a sample.

A superficial biopsy is where the area to be biopsied lies just under the skin. Superficial biopsies can be done anywhere on the body, but the most common areas are the neck, armpits and groins.

There are two types of biopsies:

Fine needle aspiration biopsy (FNA)

This uses a thin needle, similar to a blood test needle, to take the sample. Local anaesthetic may or may not be needed.

Core biopsy

This uses a thicker needle to take the sample. Local anaesthetic is used to numb the skin before the biopsy is done.

Before your biopsy

Before sending you for a biopsy, your doctor should explain the reasons for doing this test.

If you are taking blood thinning tablets or injections then these will usually need to be stopped before your biopsy. Your doctor should ask you about this before sending you for the biopsy.

The most common blood thinning treatments include:

- Aspirin
- Clexane
- Dalteparin
- Fragmin
- Heparin
- Rivaroxaban
- Warfarin

If you are taking any of these or other blood thinning treatments, please contact your doctor or the department on **0161 446 3322** or **0161 918 2346** (ultrasound) as soon as possible. We can advise you when you need to stop your medication. If you do not stop taking your blood thinning treatments, your biopsy may be postponed.

On the day of your biopsy

You can eat and drink as normal before you come for your biopsy.

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Blood tests are not usually needed before FNS, but are usually performed for core biopsies.

The radiologist performing the biopsy will explain the procedure to you fully and let you ask any questions. If you are happy to go ahead, we will ask you to sign a consent form agreeing to accept the treatment that you are being offered. The basis of the agreement is that you have had The Christie's written description of the proposed treatment and that you have been given an opportunity to discuss any concerns. You are entitled to request a second opinion from another doctor who specialises in treating this cancer. You can ask your own consultant or your GP to refer you. Your consent may be withdrawn at any time before or during this treatment. Should you decide to withdraw your consent then a member of your treating team will discuss the possible consequences with you.

The radiologist will first scan the area and decide on the best position to do the biopsy. A needle is inserted using ultrasound to guide the needle. The biopsy should take approximately 30 minutes.

After your biopsy

After the biopsy, you may be asked to wait in hospital for a short time. The result of the biopsy will normally be sent to your consultant within a week.

Complications

Superficial biopsies are very safe procedures. There is a small risk of causing bleeding or infection, or damage to structures near the area being biopsied.

If you feel very unwell after the biopsy, you should go to your local Accident and Emergency department (A&E) and tell them that you have had a biopsy.

Cancellation of appointment or queries (9am – 5pm)

Please contact the department as soon as possible on **0161 446 3322** (ultrasound).

If you have any problems or worries, please contact:

The Christie Hotline: **0161 446 3658** (open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week).

If you need information in a different format, such as easy read, large print, BSL, braille, email, SMS text or other communication support, please tell your ward or clinic nurse.

We try to ensure that all our information given to patients is accurate, balanced and based on the most up-to-date scientific evidence. If you would like to have details about the sources used please contact patient.information@christie.nhs.uk

For information and advice visit the cancer information centres at Withington, Oldham or Salford. Opening times can vary, please check before making a special journey.

Contact The Christie Hotline for
urgent support and specialist advice
The Christie Hotline: 0161 446 3658
Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

