

Radiology department

Information about internal organ biopsy

What is an internal organ 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.

Biopsies can be done using ultrasound or computed tomography (CT). Ultrasound uses sound waves, and CT uses X-rays, to look at tissues inside the body. The radiologist (radiology doctor) doing the biopsy will decide on the most appropriate method and use it to guide a needle into the right place to take a sample.

The most common organs biopsied are the liver, kidney, pancreas and lymph nodes.

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
- Clopidogrel
- 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** (ultrasound) or **0161 446 3884** (CT) 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.

Blood tests are needed before internal organ biopsies.

A cannula will be needed before a CT-guided biopsy. A cannula is a small flexible tube which is placed in one of your veins.

The Radiologist doing 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 or CT to guide the needle. The biopsy should take approximately 30 minutes.

After your biopsy

After the biopsy, you will normally need to stay in hospital for 4-6 hours. Routine checks will be made to make sure there is no internal bleeding or other complications.

The result of the biopsy will normally be sent to your consultant within a week.

Important information:

We recommend you do not drive or exercise for the rest of the day.

If possible, we suggest that you have someone to stay with you overnight.

Complications

Biopsies are generally safe procedures, but with any procedure there are risks.

The main, but rare, complication for internal organ biopsy is serious bleeding. There is also a small risk of causing infection, or damage to structures near the area being biopsied.

In addition, biopsies of certain organs carry additional risks:

- Liver - severe bleeding is a rare complication (sometimes needing blood transfusion, operation or another procedure).
- Kidney - kidney damage, blood in the urine.
- Pancreas - pancreatitis (inflammation of the pancreas, which can be a serious condition).

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) or **0161 446 3884** (CT)

If you have any problems or worries, please contact:

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

Notes:

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

