

Renal Biopsy

Patient information - Nephrology Department

Why a renal biopsy is needed

Your doctor suggested a renal biopsy for one or more of the following reasons:

- To help find out the cause of your kidney problem
- To find out how severe the kidney damage is.
- To help your doctors to decide on a treatment for your kidney problem.

Before the biopsy

Before the biopsy a kidney doctor will discuss the procedure with you. explaining why you need the biopsy, what will happen during and after the biopsy, and any possible risks or complications. You will have an opportunity to ask questions before being asked to sign a consent form for the procedure. This consent form means you understand what the procedure involves, the possible risks and agree to allow the doctor to perform the procedure.

Preparation needed before a kidney biopsy

You will have some blood tests to check how well your blood clots. This is to reduce the risk of bleeding after the biopsy.

We recommend a light breakfast the day of the biopsy. You can drink as normal.

Medicines

Aspirin - do not take for two weeks prior to the biopsy (Panadol is okay).

Blood thinning medicines (such as warfarin) – please discuss with your doctor

Blood pressure tablets – take as prescribed

Biopsy procedure

The procedure takes about thirty minutes.

- You will be asked to lie flat on your front with a pillow supporting you. (if you have a transplanted kidney you will be asked lie on your back)
- We will use an ultrasound machine to locate your kidneys which allows the doctor to get the tissue sample from exactly the right place
- Your doctor will then inject some local anesthetic into a small area of skin and tissue just over the kidney to be biopsied. This stings a little at first, but then the area will become numb.
- Your doctor pushes A special hollow needle through your skin and muscle to get to

your kidney. The needle is then removed quickly taking with it a small tissue sample. This is usually repeated until sufficient tissue samples are obtained. (normally two samples of tissue are required)

- Your doctor may ask you to hold your breath for 5 – 10 seconds while inserting and removing the needle.
- You will feel pressure as the doctor pushes the needle through your skin and muscle but the procedure should not hurt.

What happens after the biopsy

Immediately

- You will need to lie flat on your back for four hours.
- You will be able to sit up slightly for another two hours. (giving a total of six hours)
- You will need to drink plenty of fluids.
- A nurse will check your blood pressure, pulse, biopsy site and any urine you pass (this is to check you are not bleeding)

Discharge from hospital

If you are in hospital just for a renal biopsy and you have no complications, you will be able to leave after six hours of bed rest.

No complications

You may return to work the day following the biopsy.

Avoid heavy lifting, contact sport, etc. for one week after the biopsy to allow your kidney to heal properly.

What are the risks of kidney biopsy?

The doctor will inform you in more detail of the potential complications of a kidney biopsy. Complications are uncommon. However a small number of people can have:

Bleeding: Most common occurrence of bleeding is blood in the urine. A very small percentage of people can have severe bleeding that requires a blood transfusion. .

Pain: Ache/ pain on the side the biopsy taken, which usually goes away after a few hours.

Results

Results are usually available within two to three days, though they can sometimes take longer.

It will be discussed how you receive these results. In some cases if there is not enough tissue to examine properly a second biopsy may be needed.

DEPARTMENT OF NEPHROLOGY

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For more information about:

- your health and medication, go to www.healthinfo.org.nz
- hospital and specialist services, go to www.cdhb.health.nz