

Having a kidney biopsy



This leaflet tells you about having a kidney biopsy. Please read it and talk to the nurse or doctor if you have any further questions.

What is a kidney biopsy?

A kidney or renal biopsy means removing a very small sample of your kidney with a special needle. This sample is examined to find the cause of the kidney disease.

Why do I need a kidney biopsy?

A biopsy can help find the reason why your kidneys are not working properly and tell what the best treatment will be.

A biopsy is only done when it has not been possible to find the cause of your kidney problem by any other tests.

Where is the biopsy done?

Your biopsy will usually be planned with you in the outpatient clinic. You will either be admitted to the renal ward (Trafford Ward) in the evening before the biopsy or come into the day case unit in the morning of your biopsy. Sometimes your biopsy is urgent and will be done when you are already in hospital.

What happens before the biopsy?

Before the biopsy can take place you will need:

- blood tests
- blood pressure to be well controlled
- urine test
- to stop taking blood thinning or anticoagulation medicine, **if your doctor has said it is safe to do so**

- Aspirin, Clopidogrel and Dipyridamole must be stopped seven days before
- Warfarin must be stopped 5 days before all other medications should be taken the morning of the biopsy and you can eat and drink as normal
- you will need to sign a consent form

Your biopsy could be postponed if any of the results show that it would not be safe for you to have the biopsy.

How is the biopsy done?

You will have your biopsy either in the day case area or on the renal ward. You will be asked to lie on your front.

The biopsy is done by:

- Finding the exact position of the kidney with an ultrasound scanner
- Cleaning the skin on your back over the kidney with an antiseptic
- Injecting first the skin and then the area around the kidney with local anaesthetic to make sure the biopsy is pain free

When the area around the kidney is numb from the local anaesthetic the biopsy needle is passed to the kidney. You will be asked to hold your breath while the sample is taken to make sure the kidney does not move.

You may feel a little pressure and hear a clicking sound when the biopsy is taken. 2-3 samples will usually be taken.

The whole procedure should take about 30 minutes.

Does it hurt?

The local anaesthetic usually stings a little when it is first injected into the skin. Most patients say that their kidney biopsy was uncomfortable but did not hurt.

What are the risks of having a kidney biopsy?

The risk of a serious complication is small.

The most serious complication is bleeding and it is important that you tell the doctor if you have problems with easy bleeding or bruising. All kidney biopsies bleed slightly, but very few bleed heavily enough to cause a problem.

- In about 1 in 10 biopsies you can see blood in the urine but it settles on its own
- In about 1 in 100 biopsies you bleed more and a blood transfusion is needed
- Fewer than 1 in 500 biopsies need an x-ray or surgical procedure to stop the bleeding
- In about 1 in 10,000 you could require a surgical removal of the kidney to stop the bleeding

What happens after the biopsy?

After the biopsy you will be taken back to the ward. Here you will:

- Be asked to lie flat in bed for 6 hours to reduce risk of bleeding. The head of the bed can be raised slightly so that you can drink etc...
- Have your blood pressure and pulse monitored very closely until the bed rest is over
- Have your urine inspected for signs of blood
- You might feel some discomfort in the back because of bruising and pain relief will be given if needed
- If you need to pass water you will need to use a bed pan or urine bottle
- Following your bed rest, the nurses will assess whether you are ready to get out of bed and go home. As long as there is no bleeding you can leave hospital the same day. You must be driven rather than drive yourself

- You must have a responsible adult at home with you for 24 hours after your biopsy

What should I do at home?

Rest if possible. You can usually go back to work after two days rest at home but you should:

- Avoid any strenuous activity, exercise or heavy lifting for two weeks after the biopsy (for example picking up heavy shopping or manual work)
- Not drive until the day after the biopsy and only if you have no pain

If you feel dizzy, get severe pain around the kidney or see blood in your urine or are unable to pass urine you must contact the ward straight away (see page 9 for contact details).

When can I have a bath or shower?

The day after the biopsy.

When do I get the results?

For urgent biopsies we usually get the first results within 48 hours and this can give us enough information to diagnose many kidney problems. However, we have to examine the kidney tissue with special stains and an electron microscope before we have the final result. This usually takes about two weeks and results should be available at your next outpatient appointment.

Contacts

If you have any questions/concerns or need any advice before admission:

Renal Ward: 01273 696955, Extension 4057

Renal Outpatient: 01273 696955, Extension 7624

If you have any problems after you go home, contact the Renal Ward immediately. The ward is staffed 24 hours a day.

Renal Ward: 01273 696955, Extension 4057

Further information

You can get more information from National Kidney Research Fund on their website:

www.kidneyresearchuk.org/

Or by calling their helpline on 0845 3001499

You can contact South Eastern Kidney Patients Association (SEKPA) by writing to:

South Eastern Kidney Patients' Association

c/o Sussex Kidney Unit

Royal Sussex County Hospital

Eastern Road

Brighton

East Sussex, BN2 5BE

Or on their website: <http://sekpa.org/>

Other useful websites

National Kidney Foundation

www.kidney.org

The British Kidney Patient Association

www.britishkidney-pa.co.uk

If you have any questions or concerns that are not covered in this leaflet please call the renal ward on: 01273 696955 Ext 4057.

Sussex Kidney Unit

Brighton & Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust Royal Sussex County Hospital, Eastern Road Brighton, East Sussex, BN2 5BE

Phone: 01273 696955 Ext. 4057

Fax: 01273 679788

If you require this document in a language other than English please inform your interpreter or a member of staff.

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Se precisa deste documento noutra língua por favor informe o seu interprete ou um membro do pessoal.

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