

# Ultrasound-guided biopsy

## Patient information factsheet

### What is an ultrasound-guided biopsy?

- An ultrasound-guided biopsy is a procedure done by a Doctor.
- They use a special machine called an ultrasound to see inside your body.
- Ultrasound helps them guide a thin needle through your skin.
- The needle takes a tiny piece of tissue (a sample) from a part of your body that needs to be checked.
- This sample is sent to a laboratory to be examined under a microscope.
- The results help your Doctor diagnose what is causing your symptoms and plan the best treatment for you.

### Why do I need this test?

- Sometimes, tests like ultrasound, Computerised Tomography (CT) scans, or Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scans can find something unusual in your body.
- If this happens, your Doctor might want to find out more about it.
- They may suggest having a biopsy to get a closer look. This helps them understand what is going on.
- A biopsy is usually the best way to find out if an area is benign (not cancer) or needs treatment.

### Benefits of this procedure

- Helps Doctors correctly diagnose your condition.
- A biopsy is a simple procedure. It does not involve major surgery. It is usually quick and safe.
- Having a biopsy can mean you might not need bigger surgery.

## Before your appointment

### Preparation

- Tell your Doctor if you take any medicines that thin your blood (like warfarin, aspirin, or clopidogrel), or if you bleed easily. Your Doctor may need to change your medicines before the procedure.
- You may need a blood test beforehand to check how well your blood clots. These tests show whether your blood clots too slowly (risk of bleeding) or too quickly (risk of dangerous clots).
- If your appointment letter says to, do not eat before the test. Sometimes you cannot eat for a few hours.
- Follow the instructions in your appointment letter carefully.
- Arrange for someone to collect you and stay with you after the procedure if necessary.

## On the day of the procedure

- You will be asked about your medications, and allergies.
- You may need to change into a hospital gown.
- A Radiologist (a specialist Doctor) will explain the test, answer your questions, and ask you to sign a consent form.

## During the procedure

- The skin over the biopsy site is cleaned with antiseptic.
- A local anaesthetic is injected to numb the area. You may feel a brief sting, but it should become numb quickly.
- The Doctor uses the ultrasound screen to guide the needle into the correct position and take a small tissue sample.
- A few samples may be taken, depending on the area.
- A small dressing is applied at the end of the procedure.
- The whole biopsy usually takes about 30 to 45 minutes.

## After the procedure

- You may rest in the recovery area for a short time.
- You might feel a little pain or bruising around the biopsy site — this is common and often settles with time.
- If it bleeds a little, press on the area (cold compress). Use a cold pack or cold cloth. Keep gentle pressure on it.
- Do not lift heavy things and do not do hard exercise.
- Rest for a few days.

## Possible risks

Ultrasound-guided biopsy is generally safe, but as with all procedures there are some risks:

- Bleeding or bruising
- Infection at the biopsy site
- You may feel pain for a short time. It might feel sore or uncomfortable.
- Sometimes the sample is not enough. If this happens, the test may need to be done again.

## Going home

- Rest for the rest of the day. Follow the instructions you were given.
- Keep the dressing clean and dry. Your healthcare team will tell you when it is safe to shower.
- Seek medical help (contact your GP or NHS 111/urgent care) if you develop increasing pain, redness, pus, or high temperature.

## Getting your results

- Results usually take 1 to 4 weeks. This depends on where the sample is tested.
- Your Doctor or Nurse will tell you how you will get your results. They may call you. Or you may get the results at your next appointment.

## Contact our service

For questions about your appointment at the Imaging Department please contact us on 020 7288 5888 (Monday to Friday from 9am to 3pm).

For any other questions, please contact the service who referred you to have this procedure.

## Contact our Trust

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern, please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on **020 7288 5551** or [whh-tr.PALS@nhs.net](mailto:whh-tr.PALS@nhs.net).

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet, please email [whh-tr.patient-information@nhs.net](mailto:whh-tr.patient-information@nhs.net). We will try our best to meet your needs.

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## Document information

Date published: 27/03/2026 | Review date: 27/03/2028 | Ref: ACW/Imag/USGBiop/01  
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