

Bone Marrow Biopsy

Oncology and Clinical Haematology

Introduction

Your doctor has recommended that you have a bone marrow biopsy. This leaflet has been written to help you understand more about these tests. It contains information about the procedure and what to expect.

What is a bone marrow biopsy?

These tests look at your bone marrow. Bone marrow is the spongy blood cell forming tissue, found within the bones. Your bone marrow produces red blood cells, white blood cells and platelets. The samples are looked at under the microscope and a number of specialised tests can be performed.

Consent

We must seek your consent for any procedure or treatment beforehand. Your doctor will explain the risks, benefits and alternatives where relevant before they ask for your consent. If you are unsure about any aspect of the procedure or treatment proposed please do not hesitate to ask for more information.

What are the benefits of having a bone marrow biopsy?

There are several reasons why a bone marrow biopsy may be performed. Please discuss with your doctor the reason for your test.

The test may be performed to detect the cause of an abnormality in the blood for example:

- Low red cell count (anaemia)
- High or low white blood cell count
- High or low platelet count
- Other abnormalities that may have been detected on a blood test
- Abnormal or cancer cells
- Infection

The results from the bone marrow tests help your doctor diagnose your illness and make important decisions about your care and treatment.

The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available
- If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111
- Keep the environment clean and tidy
- Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.

Are there any risks involved in having a local anaesthetic?

The risks of having a local anaesthetic are small. However, these are some of the rare side effects that you should know about:

- Bleeding from the injection site
- Pain and soreness as the local anaesthetic wears off
- Allergic reaction
- Numbness and damage to nerves

Medical staff are trained to deal with these side effects.

Are there any risks involved in having a bone marrow biopsy?

The risks of having a bone marrow biopsy are small. However, these are some of the rare side effects that you should know about:

- Bleeding
- Infection
- Damage to nerves
- Damage to bone

The consultant in charge of your care will discuss any risks with you. You should ask any questions that you may have at this point to ensure you understand. You will be asked to sign a consent form prior to the procedure.

If you have a low platelet count you may need a platelet transfusion before the procedure but your doctor will inform you of this.

If you are taking blood thinning drugs, for example: Aspirin, Clopidogrel, Apixiban or Warfarin, please inform your consultant as soon as possible as you may have to stop these prior to your biopsy. Alternatively, discuss this with your clinical nurse specialist on 01902 695276.

Are there any alternatives to having a bone marrow biopsy and what would happen if I decide not to have this procedure done?

Your doctor will discuss with you any other options that may be available to you. Your doctor will also discuss with you what would happen if you decide not to have the procedure done.

How is the procedure performed?

The iliac crest (hip bone) is usually used for the test. Very occasionally the sternum (breast bone) may be used. You will be asked to lie on your side and it is advisable that you wear something loose on the day such as a tracksuit. A doctor and nurse will be present during the procedure.

First your skin will be cleaned thoroughly. The area is numbed using an injection of local anaesthetic which may sting for a few seconds as it is given. After the local anaesthetic has taken effect a needle will be inserted into the bone and a small amount of marrow removed. This will feel uncomfortable and is described as a "pulling" or "drawing" sensation. A bone marrow biopsy consists of taking a small core of bone and you may feel a "pushing" or "bearing down" sensation. After the needle has been removed, pressure is applied to the area for a few minutes until the site stops bleeding. A small dressing will be applied to the area which can be removed the following day.

How long does it take?

The complete procedure takes about 15 to 20 minutes to perform. You will be asked to remain on the bed for 10 to 15 minutes following the procedure. We will check the site for any bleeding and apply a dressing before you leave the unit. If you attend the ward as an outpatient and have a sedative during the procedure, you will need to remain on the ward until the effects of the sedative have worn off.

This varies depending on the individual's recovery rate.

It is not recommended that you drive yourself to the hospital on the day of the test.

Will it hurt?

You may find the procedure uncomfortable. However you will be given a local anaesthetic before the procedure begins and you should tell the doctor immediately if you feel any pain. You are advised to take a painkiller such as paracetamol afterwards to help prevent discomfort which may last for two to three days. It is common to experience some bruising.

When can I expect the results from the test?

It can take approximately 4-6 weeks for all the results to come back. At the time of the procedure your doctor will advise you as to when to expect the results and you will be given an appointment to return for the results.

What can I do to help?

It is better if you do not drive yourself to your appointment and that you bring another adult with you. You can remove the dressing after 24 hours. If there is a lot of bleeding, swelling, redness, discharge or persistent discomfort please ring for advice on 01902 694241 or 07920 587036. Please make sure that you have an appointment to return for the results of your tests.

Where can I get more information?

If you have any questions or concerns about having these tests, please speak to your doctor or nurse.

You can also speak to the Haematology Nurse Specialist by telephoning 01902 695276 Monday-Friday, 8:30am-4:30pm. You can also call the Durnall Day Case Unit on 01902 694045.

Your appointment is on:

at:

For New Cross Hospital patients:- Durnall Unit - B12, Floor 3, Heart and Lung Centre

For Cannock Chase Hospital patients:- Davy Unit, Cannock Chase Hospital, Telephone Number 01543 572757

You can also visit the following website:

<http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk>

English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。