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## Patient information

### **Transplanted Kidney Biopsy**

Nephrology and Renal Transplant Departments

## **What is a biopsy?**

A biopsy means removing a very small sample (a few millimetres) of tissue from your transplanted kidney using a special needle. The sample is examined under a microscope and various tests can be carried out on it.

## **What are the benefits of having a biopsy?**

This may be the only way your doctors can check how well your transplanted kidney is working and decide on the best treatment for you.

## **Are there any special preparations?**

You will be admitted to the Transplant Unit (Ward 9A) shortly before the procedure is planned. A nurse will check your temperature, pulse and blood pressure and may take some blood samples. You will be asked to shower using an antiseptic soap solution and you will be given a hospital gown and disposable pants to wear.

Your doctor will discuss the procedure with you and ask you to sign a consent form. You can eat and drink normally and you should take all your usual medication, which you should bring with you.

If you take “blood thinning” drugs such as Warfarin, Clexane etc; check with your doctor in advance if these need to be stopped or the dose changed.

## **Where is the biopsy done?**

The biopsy is done in a special room on the Transplant Unit (Ward 9A).

## **How is it done?**

You will be asked to lie flat on your back. Please let your doctor know if you have a problem doing this.

Your tummy will be cleaned with an antiseptic solution. Please inform the doctor if you are allergic to any particular antiseptic solutions.

The doctor or a special technician will look at your kidney with an ultrasound machine. This is not painful or harmful. Local anaesthetic will be injected under the skin to numb the area. This may sting at first, but this soon subsides.

Local anaesthesia is a drug induced numbness: it may be provided by an Anaesthetist, Surgeon or other healthcare professional, depending on the technique used.

Like all medicines, local anaesthetics may sometimes cause side-effects as well as the effects that are needed. You may experience dizziness, blurred vision, drowsiness and occasionally loss of consciousness.

Serious side effects are rare and include fits, low blood pressure, slowed breathing and changes in heart beat, which may be life-threatening. If you have any concerns about any of these effects, you should discuss them with your doctor.

Once the skin is numb, the doctor pushes a special hollow needle into your transplanted kidney. You should not be aware of

any pain, but you may feel a little pressure and hear a clicking sound when the biopsy sample is taken.

The doctor may ask you to hold your breath for a few seconds while this is done. It may be necessary to take more than one sample to get enough tissue to examine.

### **After the biopsy**

A firm dressing will be applied to the biopsy area and you will need to stay on bed rest for four hours. During this time, your temperature, pulse, blood pressure and the biopsy site will be checked regularly by the nurses. If you need to use the toilet during this time you will be assisted to use a urinal (bottle) or bed pan. Simple painkillers such as Paracetamol can be given for any discomfort.

### **Are there any risks?**

The risk of a serious complication is very small. It is possible that the biopsy needle could damage the kidney or other parts of the body nearby. Bleeding is the most common complication. It is not uncommon to have some blood in your urine after a biopsy, but this usually settles by itself within 24 hours. You may be kept in hospital until your urine is clear of blood.

Occasionally bleeding can be bad enough that you need a blood transfusion. Very rarely, an operation may be needed to stop the bleeding and in a very few cases your kidney may have to be removed.

A rare complication is infection from the biopsy. All precautions are taken to prevent this.

You should inform the Transplant Unit if you have any of the following problems:

- Blood in your urine more than 24 hours after the biopsy.
- You are unable to pass urine.
- You have a fever or a high temperature.
- You have worsening pain at the biopsy site.
- You have faintness or dizziness.

Providing there are no problems and you have given a urine sample which is not blood stained you will normally be allowed home once you have completed the four hours of bed-rest. You should not do any heavy lifting or strenuous exercise for about a week.

## **Further information**

**If you have any further questions or require further information please contact:**

**Royal Liverpool University Hospital:  
Transplant Unit – Ward 9A**

**Tel: 0151 706 2000**

**Tel: 0151 706 2395**

**Tel: 0151 706 3409**

**[www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)**

**[www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk)**

**[www.kidney.org.uk](http://www.kidney.org.uk)**

# Author: Nephrology and Renal Transplant Departments

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All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

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