

Liver Biopsy

Liver Biopsy

A liver biopsy is a procedure done in a hospital. During the biopsy, a doctor will remove a very small piece of your liver for testing. The procedure is normally not painful and will not harm your liver.

A liver biopsy is usually an outpatient procedure. This means you will be able to go home the same day as the biopsy. If your blood does not clot normally, you shouldn't have a liver biopsy.

Your health care provider may order a liver biopsy for you to find out more about the health of your liver. This information is important if you have hepatitis C or another liver disease. It can help you and your provider decide on the best treatment for you. Your provider may also order the procedure to help determine what is causing a liver problem.

Though rare, there are risks from a liver biopsy. They include bleeding from the liver, the biopsy needle entering another organ, or very rarely, death (1 in 10,000 cases).

Before the Biopsy

- Tell your provider about all the medicines you take, even over-the-counter products. You should not take aspirin or other blood-thinning medicines for a week before and after a liver biopsy.

- Arrange for someone to drive you home after the procedure. You will receive an anesthetic (pain killer) during the biopsy and you should not drive after that.

During the Biopsy

- You will lie on your back during the procedure.
- The doctor will locate your liver and clean the skin around the area.
- You will receive an anesthetic. You may feel a sting from the needle.
- You may feel pressure when the doctor inserts the needle into your side to remove a liver sample.

After the Biopsy

- You will be in the hospital for a number of hours to make sure you don't develop any bleeding.
- The doctor may order blood tests to check for complications.
- You will need to have someone drive you home when you are discharged.

Care at Home After a Biopsy

Follow your provider's advice about how to care for yourself after the procedure.

In general, avoid lifting heavy weights or exercising too hard for 2 weeks. This will allow the biopsy site to heal properly.