

Taking a sample of your liver



A guide



Incorporating: Chapel Allerton Hospital, Cookridge Hospital, Leeds Chest Clinic, Leeds Dental Institute, Seacroft Hospital,
St James's University Hospital, The General Infirmary at Leeds Wharfedale Hospital

Introduction

Your doctors have advised you that they need to examine a small sample of your liver. In patients with liver problems a sample like this will tell the doctors how much damage has been done, if any, and also help them to plan your treatment. Not all patients require treatment, but the only way to know for certain is to have a liver sample examined. This pamphlet may not answer all your questions, so if you have any worries do not hesitate to ask the nurse responsible for your care.

What you should expect?

You have received a letter informing you of two dates:

- one date to attend for bloods and consent taking
- one date for you to attend for the liver sample procedure.

The week before: On the first date we will take a blood sample from you. This blood test is necessary as we need to check that it is safe for you to undertake the actual liver sample procedure. You will also be seen by a doctor who will ask you to sign a consent form for the procedure. Please confirm that you can attend this appointment by telephoning the Hepatology Liaison Sister on 0113 2066585. Alternatively, you can confirm with their secretary on 0113 2065951. Failure to attend for this first appointment will automatically result in cancellation of the liver sample test.

The second date you have been given is for you to attend for the liver sample test.

The day of the test: The test may be performed either on a Monday or Thursday. If the test is performed on a Monday, you will need to come to the David Beavers Day Care Unit (Tel: 0113 2064788) at St James's Hospital at 11am. If the test is to be performed on a Thursday, you will need to come to the David Beavers Day Care Unit at 8.30 am. There are two car-parking facilities opposite the hospital if you are being driven to the hospital. The unit is sign-posted from the Lincoln Wing, which is immediately to your left after you have come over the roundabout at the main entrance to the hospital.

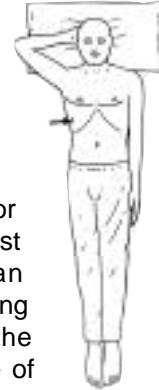
Please inform the doctor or nurse of any allergies or bad reactions you may have had to drugs or other tests.

If you have any worries or questions at this stage do not be afraid to ask. The staff will want you to be as relaxed as possible and will be happy to answer any questions.

The test itself

You will need to change into a hospital gown for the test. The test will be performed in the X-ray department.

You will be asked to lie on your back with your right arm tucked behind your head (see picture). The doctor will clean the skin on the right side of your lower chest with an antiseptic agent. You will then receive an injection of local anaesthetic into the skin. This may sting for a few seconds and then numbs the skin. Once the area is nicely numb you will be ready for the sample of liver to be removed.



The doctor will ask you to hold your breath for a few seconds whilst the needle is placed into your liver. You will hear a click when the sample is taken and the needle will be removed. The needle is in the liver for only a few seconds. Usually only one sample is taken but this may need to be repeated. This part of the test takes only a few seconds.

After the test you need to remain lying down for 6 hours, if you require the toilet a nurse will bring you a bottle or bedpan as necessary. Whilst lying in your bed your blood pressure and pulse rate will be regularly checked. After this time, you will be allowed to get up and walk around. If you feel alright and your blood pressure and pulse rate are satisfactory then you will be discharged home. Sometimes we advise patients to stay in overnight.

Common questions and worries

1. What if I am too frightened to go through with the test?

We are quite used to patients feeling anxious about many of the tests we do in hospitals. Some patients do require some sedation to tolerate this test and this is perfectly safe, however if you have had sedation, you will need someone to take you home.

2. Will I feel a lot of pain?

Before the sample is removed, the skin and tissues below are numbed with local anaesthetic. After the procedure some patients do feel some ache/discomfort in the right side and/or in the right shoulder area. If the ache becomes a pain then painkillers are given to take it away.

By the time you go home any pain will have gone away. Some patients do continue to ache for a few days after the test. If this happens, take simple painkillers like Paracetamol, if necessary.



3. What should I bring with me to hospital?

Bring night clothes, toiletries and a small amount of money. If you wish, you may bring something to read. Bringing large amounts of money or credit cards is not recommended. Mobile phones may only be used outside of the hospital buildings.

4. Can I eat and drink?

You can eat and drink before during and after the test. There is no restriction.

5. Can I drive home afterwards?

Under no circumstances should you drive home after the liver sample test. We recommend that you are driven home by another person, or take a taxi. If you do use public transport to return home, please be sure there is somebody with you.

6. Does someone need to be at home with me on discharge from hospital?

We recommend that someone will be there to stay with you for the first night.

7. How soon can I return to work?

This needs to be discussed with the doctor before discharge from the hospital, as each person requires individual assessment.

8. When should I remove the dressing?

You can remove the dressing the next day at home. If there is still some oozing from the site, apply a waterproof plaster. If the oozing continues for three days, please contact your GP.

What happens after the test?

The doctor will inform you when you can go home. An outpatient appointment will be arranged for the next 2 - 4 weeks to discuss the results, and decide on further treatment.

Your appointment has been made for:

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Please inform the Hepatology Liaison Sisters' secretary if you are unable to attend this appointment (Telephone: 0113 2065951)

