

TRANSRECTAL PROSTATE BIOPSY

What is it?

A transrectal prostate biopsy is a test to obtain a tissue sample from the prostate. This sample is sent to a pathology lab where it is processed and examined to determine whether there is any cancer present.

What are the indications for biopsy?

The indications are the abnormal PSA level in the blood and/or an abnormal digital examination of the prostate (this is done by palpating the gland with a finger inserted in the back passage). Repeat biopsies are performed in patients with a previously normal biopsy if the PSA remains abnormal or rises.

What preparation is needed for the examination?

You will need to start antibiotics the evening before your biopsy. You will be given a prescription for Ciproxin 500mg to take twice a day for 5 days. You need to take one dose the evening before your biopsy. If you are taking Aspirin you must stop taking it for 7 days prior to your biopsy. If you are taking any other drugs to thin the blood such as Warfarin, Clopidigrel (Plavix) then you need to contact us. Please continue to take all your other medications.

What happens during the procedure?

When you arrive in the department you will be taken into a cubicle to get changed. You will then be taken to the ultrasound room. There you will meet the Consultant Radiologist who will be performing the examination. He/she will go through the procedure and you will have time to ask questions. You will be asked to sign a consent form.

You will then lie on an examination couch on your left side. A small ultrasound probe will be placed into the rectum (back passage). This will be a little uncomfortable but not painful, it may give you a desire to urinate. Local anaesthetic will be given around the prostate. You may be aware of a slight stinging sensation when this is done. Biopsies will then be taken using a small automated needle. You will be warned before each biopsy as the device makes an audible clicking noise. Between 6 - 12 biopsies will be taken. The probe is then removed and a small suppository of antibiotics is placed in the rectum (back passage).

Does the procedure hurt?

Most patients find that the biopsies are not painful to have taken and there may be a mild pelvic discomfort following the procedure.

How long will it take?

You will be in the ultrasound room for approximately 30 minutes but the biopsy itself takes only 10 minutes.

INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING BIOPSY

You must remember to take the full course of antibiotics as prescribed. We recommend that you rest for the remainder of the day following biopsy.

What will I experience following the biopsy?

Minor side effects are very common following the procedure. Almost everyone will see blood in the urine. Following the procedure the first time you pass urine it may be quite red but this should reduce with time. You may continue to see some blood in the urine up to 5 days following the biopsy. If it is not settling or the amount of blood is increasing then you need to contact the hospital or your referring doctor.

There will also be blood from the rectum (back passage). It is usual to see some blood and possibly clots the first time you open your bowels following the biopsy. You may see a little blood subsequently but this should not be heavy. Very rarely (less than 1% risk) patients can experience heavy bleeding from the rectum which may require hospitalisation and transfusion.

It is common to see blood in the semen (sperm) following biopsy and this can last up to 6 weeks.

Infection following the procedure is rare (less than 1 in 100) but can be serious. The 5-day course of antibiotics must be completed even if you feel well. It is essential that you contact the hospital, your doctor or your local A & E department if you feel unwell, develop a fever, rigors (shaking) or have pain and burning when you void. In the majority of cases all that is required is a change in antibiotics but occasionally hospitalisation and intravenous treatment is needed.

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