

Have someone drive you home after your liver biopsy. You may feel some pain near the biopsy site or in your right shoulder. Be sure to get plenty of rest. Also, avoid alcohol, aspirin, heavy labor, and exercise for the first few days. And follow your doctor's advice.

When to Call Your Doctor

Call your doctor right away if you have any of the following:

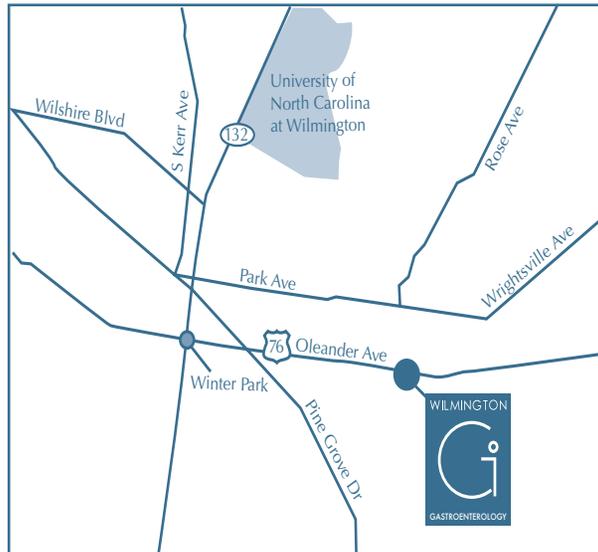
- Severe pain near the biopsy site or in the abdomen or chest.
- Fainting or feeling light-headed.
- Trouble breathing.

Getting Your Results

The liver tissue sample is sent to a lab where it is examined under a microscope. Getting your biopsy results may take a few days. When these results are ready, your doctor can discuss them with you.

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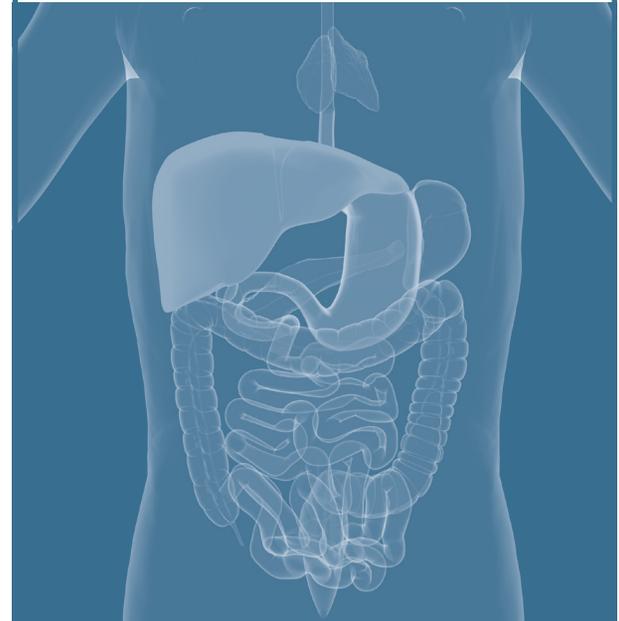
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Liver Biopsy

Diagnosing Liver Conditions



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What is a Liver Biopsy?

A liver biopsy is a special procedure that's safe and quick. It helps your doctor assess the health of the liver. During the biopsy, a needle is inserted through the skin (**percutaneous**) and into the liver. A small sample of liver tissue is then removed and sent to a lab to be examined.

Who Needs a Liver Biopsy?

A liver biopsy may be done if you have:

- Symptoms of a liver problem, such as jaundice (yellowing skin and eyes) or dark urine
- Abnormal liver imaging or blood tests
- A chronic liver condition
- Treatment with medications, which may affect the liver

Getting Ready

Prepare for your liver biopsy as instructed. Also, follow these tips:

- Be sure to have any blood tests that your doctor orders.
- Stop taking aspirin and other medications as directed.
- Do not eat or drink anything - not even water - after the midnight before your liver biopsy.
- Arrange for someone to drive you home after your biopsy.
- Ask your doctor any questions you may have.

Possible Risks and Complications

Your doctor will discuss with you the possible risks and complications of a liver biopsy. They may include any of the following:

- Infection

- Internal bleeding from the liver
- Damage to organs near the liver (lungs, gallbladder, or intestines)
- Need for a second liver biopsy if not enough liver tissue was obtained the first time

The Procedure

A liver biopsy is most often an outpatient procedure. It is done in a hospital or a same-day surgery center. The biopsy is performed by the doctor with the help of a nurse. In some cases, an ultrasound scan may be used to assist the procedure. A liver biopsy most often takes less than 20 minutes.

During the Procedure

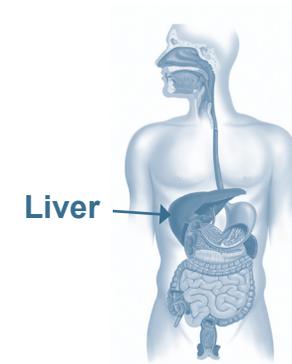
- You will be asked to change into a hospital gown. You will lie on your back or your left side. Part of your body will be draped.
- Your blood pressure, pulse, and temperature will be checked before and after the procedure.
- You may be given a sedative (a relaxing medication) through an IV (intravenous) line. The skin on the right side of the lower ribs is cleansed and numbed.
- A tiny incision is then made. A small syringe with a hollow needle is inserted through the incision.
- A small sample of liver tissue is then taken out. While this is done, you will be told to hold your breath. Doing so helps prevent any organ injury. The needle is removed in 1 or 2 seconds.
- After the tissue sample is obtained, an adhesive bandage is placed over the incision site. You may be asked to lie for a while on your right side. A pillow or a

special sandbag may be used. This helps apply pressure to the incision site. The incision heals on its own.

- You will be monitored at the hospital or surgery center for a few hours after your biopsy.

The Liver

The liver is a large organ in the upper right part of the abdominal cavity. A healthy liver metabolizes proteins, carbohydrates, and fats. It also makes a digestive fluid (bile) and removes blood toxins.

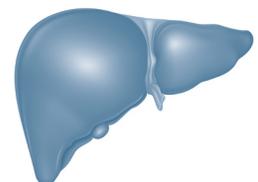


What a Liver Biopsy Can Do

A liver biopsy helps your doctor diagnose a liver problem, such as cirrhosis or a fatty liver. It also aids him or her in assessing the cause and severity of your liver problem.



Cirrhosis (chronic scarring of the liver)



Healthy liver.