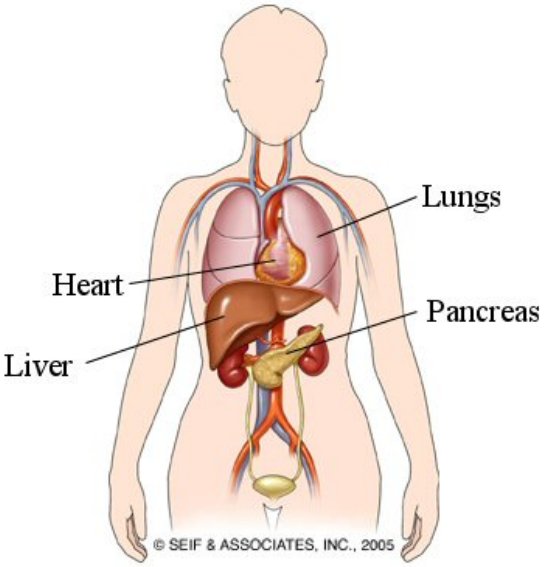
Liver Biopsy

A liver biopsy is done to confirm or prove a suspected problem. The liver is a large organ in the upper right hand of your abdomen. To do the test, the doctor puts a small needle into the right side of your abdomen. A tiny piece of liver tissue is taken and sent for testing. This should not be painful as the skin is injected with a local anesthetic that numbs the area.



HOW A BIOPSY IS PERFORMED

This is often performed as a same day surgery. This can be done in a hospital or clinic. Biopsies are often done under local anesthesia which makes the area of biopsy numb. Sometimes sedation is given to help patients relax.

If you are taking blood thinning medications or medications containing aspirin, this must be discussed with your caregiver before the test. This medication may need to be stopped for up to 7 days before the procedure, or the dose may need to be changed. You should review all of your other medications with your caregiver before the test.

You must remain in bed for 1 to 2 hours after the test. Having something to read may help pass the time.

BEFORE SURGERY

You should be present 1 hour prior to your procedure or as directed. Check in at the admissions desk for filling out necessary forms if not pre-registered. There will be consent forms to sign prior to the procedure. There is a waiting area for your family while you are having your biopsy.

LET YOUR CAREGIVERS KNOW ABOUT THE FOLLOWING:

- Allergies.
- Medications taken including herbs, eye drops, over - the- counter medications, and creams.
- Use of steroids (by mouth or creams).
- Previous problems with anesthetics or novocaine.
- Possibility of pregnancy, if this applies.
- History of blood clots (*thrombophlebitis*).
- History of bleeding or blood problems.
- Previous surgery.
- Other health problems.

AFTER YOUR TEST

- After your biopsy, you will be taken to the recovery area where a nurse will watch and check your progress.
- You may have to lie on your right side for 1 to 2 hours.
- Your blood pressure and pulse will be checked often.
- If you are having pain or feel sick, tell your nurse.
- After 1 to 2 hours, if you are going home, you may sit in a chair and get dressed. The nurse will let you know when you can get up.
- Once you are doing well, barring other problems, you will be allowed to go home. Once at home, putting an ice pack on your operative site may help with discomfort and keep swelling down.
- You may resume a normal diet and activities as directed.
- Change dressings as directed.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- **Call for your results** as instructed by your caregiver. Remember it is your job to be sure you get the results of your biopsy and any additional tests performed on the sample taken. **Do not assume everything is fine if**

you do not hear from your caregiver.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- You should rest for one to two days or as instructed.
- You will need to have a responsible adult take you home and stay with you overnight.
- Do not lift over 5 lbs. or play contact sports for two weeks.
- Do not drive for 24 hours.
- Do not take medication containing aspirin or drink alcohol for one week after this test.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- There is increased bleeding (more than a small spot) from the biopsy site.
- You have redness, swelling, or increasing pain in the biopsy site.
- You develop swelling or pain in the abdomen.
- You have an unexplained oral temperature over 102º F (38.9º C).
- You notice a foul smell coming from the wound or dressing.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You develop a rash.
- You have difficulty breathing.
- You have allergic problems such as itching or swelling or shortness of breath.

Document Released: 11/09/2005 Document Re-Released: 01/09/2011
ExitCare® Patient Information ©2011 ExitCare, LLC.