



What is a liver biopsy and how is it done?

A liver biopsy is a diagnostic procedure, performed by the doctors of the Gastroenterology Division of Internal Medicine. Occasionally, liver biopsy is performed by doctors in Radiology also. A liver biopsy is done to obtain liver tissue which can help determine the extent and cause of liver injury.

During a liver biopsy, the doctor removes a small sample of liver tissue (with a needle) which can be examined under the microscope. You will lie on your back for the biopsy. A local anesthetic (numbing medicine) will be given at the site of the biopsy before the needle is inserted. You may feel pressure but pain should be minimal. After the biopsy you may feel mild to moderate pain or soreness at the biopsy site, your right shoulder, or upper abdomen (belly); if this occurs you will be offered a pain medication for the recovery area.

How do I prepare for a liver biopsy?

- **You must have a driver** who is 18 years or older present at check in and discharge. If you do not have a driver with you at check in, we will need to reschedule your appointment. This person must remain in the unit during your entire visit so that they are available as soon as you are ready to be discharged. You will not be discharged unless this person is in the unit. Because your judgment may be impaired after this procedure, you will not be released to take public transportation, a taxicab, or even walk home without another responsible adult present to accompany you.
 - Preparation for the biopsy takes about 10 minutes. The biopsy itself will take less than a minute although you will likely be in the procedure room for about 20 minutes. Patients do not routinely receive sedation for liver biopsies; please discuss this with your doctor

in advance. Your skin will be numbed with a local anesthetic. You will stay in the recovery room for at least 2 hours and up to 4 hours after your biopsy so that you can be observed for any bleeding, pain, or signs of other complications.

There are some important things you should do to prepare for your biopsy:

- **Please leave all jewelry and personal items at home.** If you bring jewelry to your appointment, we may have to ask you to remove it.
- **Please do not wear contact lenses.**
- **View the video describing risks and benefits of liver biopsy**

Visit: <http://michmed.org/MLZ7j>

- You may have a light or liquid breakfast the morning of the biopsy.
- **If you have diabetes you must call your doctor**
 - People with diabetes have special diet and medicine instructions. Call the doctor who ordered your procedure for your special diet and medicine instructions.
- You must also inform the nurse at time of scheduling if you are taking anti-arthritic medicine, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAID), aspirin, anti-platelet agents (like Plavix) or blood thinner medicine such as Coumadin, thrombin inhibitor or heparin. If a doctor ordered one (1) of these drugs, be sure to contact the doctor that ordered the drug before stopping the medicine. Within one week, seven (7) days, of your test do not take aspirin, NSAID drugs, anti-platelet agents, or blood thinners as they can increase bleeding. A few commonly known products you should avoid include:

- | | |
|-----------|-------------|
| • Aspirin | • Ascriptin |
| • Advil | • Bufferin |
| • Aleve | • Coumadin |
| • Anaprox | • Ecotrin |
| • Anacin | • Excedrin |

- Ibuprofen
- Motrin
- Naprosyn
- Nuprin
- Plavix
- Pradaxa.

After the Procedure:

- You will not be able to drive a car or return to work until the following day after your procedure.
- You may resume normal activity, including travel and flying in seven (7) days.
- You should not lift anything heavier than ten (10) pounds for seven (7) days.
- You should contact your doctor if you feel something is wrong, especially if you feel:
 - severe abdominal pain
 - fever
 - lightheadedness
 - persistent vomiting
 - vomiting of blood
 - severe shoulder pain
 - chest pain
 - shortness of breath
 - redness, swelling, red streaking or pain at your intravenous injection site

If you are unable to keep your appointment, please call the Medical Procedures Unit at (734) 936-9250.

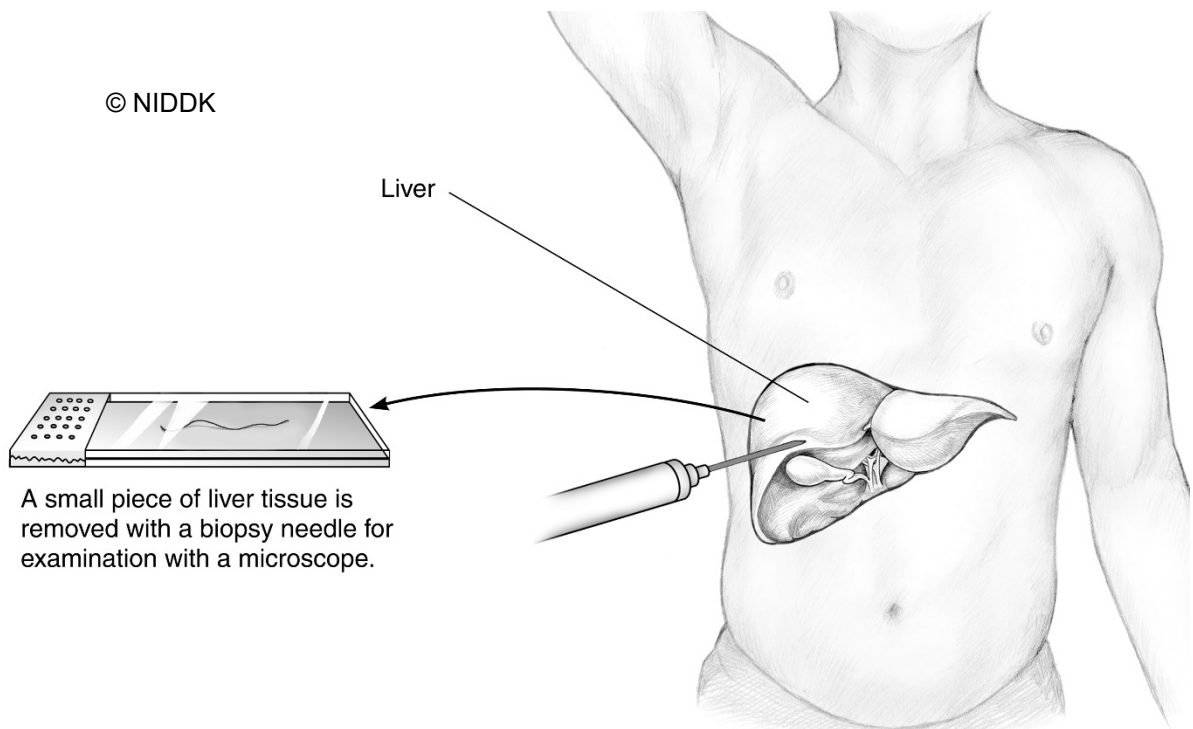
→ Turn the page to learn about the benefits, risks and alternatives for a liver biopsy

What are the Benefits, Risks and Alternatives for a Liver Biopsy?

Before starting the procedure, a member of our team will ask you to sign an informed consent indicating that you understand the procedure, its benefits and risks, and the alternatives for a liver biopsy. Read this handout or view the video at: <http://michmed.org/MLZ7j> to understand your informed consent.

What is the purpose of a liver biopsy?

Liver biopsy is a procedure to collect a small piece of liver tissue for examination under a microscope to signs of damage or disease. In the Medical Procedures Unit we perform **Percutaneous biopsy**. This is where the doctor inserts a hollow needle through the skin between the chest and the hips into the liver.



What are the benefits of Liver biopsy?

A liver biopsy is needed to diagnose diseases liver diseases that cannot be diagnosed with blood or imaging tests such as: hepatitis C, cirrhosis, infections

and cancer. It can also be used to examine a transplanted liver for signs of transplant rejection. A liver biopsy enables the doctor to estimate the degree of liver damage, a process called staging, and determine the best treatment for liver damage or disease.

What are the risks of a liver biopsy?

The risks include:

- Pain in the abdomen (belly), chest or back. This pain can persist for several hours. It occurs in 1 out of 4 patients (25%)
- Allergic reaction to the medications used during the procedure. This occurs in less than 1 in 100 patients (less than 1%)
- A reaction to the sedating medication, including breathing or heart problems.
- Bleeding or leakage of the bile fluid into the abdomen or chest. This occurs in 1-2 patients in 100 (1-2%) and may require a blood transfusion or surgery.
- Infection. Occurs in less than 1 out of 100 patients (less than 1%)
- Collapsed lung. Occurs in less than 1 out of 100 patients (less than 1%)
- Damage to nerves, blood vessels, bowel or other tissue that is close to the biopsy site.

What are the alternatives?

Blood or imaging tests such as x-rays, CT scans or MRI can show abnormalities in the liver, but there is no alternative way to obtain sample tissue from the liver without a biopsy.

Disclaimer: This document contains information and/or instructional materials developed by Michigan Medicine for the typical patient with your condition. It may include links to online content that was not created by Michigan Medicine and for which Michigan Medicine does not assume responsibility. It does not replace medical advice from your health care provider because your experience may differ from that of the typical patient. Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about this document, your condition or your treatment plan.

Patient Education by [Michigan Medicine](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International Public License](#). Last Revised 05/2019