PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Percutaneous Liver Biopsy in the Endoscopy Unit

This information will help you get ready for your percutaneous (pur-kyoo-tay-nee-uhs) liver biopsy in the endoscopy unit at Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK).

About Your Procedure

During your percutaneous liver biopsy, your doctor will insert a needle through the skin in your abdomen (belly) to remove a sample of tissue from your liver.

Your doctor will talk with you about why you’re having a liver biopsy before your procedure. Liver biopsies are done for many reasons, including:

- To look for causes of abnormal liver blood tests
- To learn more about a liver abnormality (problem) that may have been seen during another test
- To check how you’re responding to treatment
- To find the cause of:
  - Having increased liver enzymes (proteins found in the liver)
- Itching
- An enlarged liver
- Tea-colored urine
- Weight loss
- Yellowish skin and whites of the eyes (jaundice)

The procedure will take about 30 minutes.

2 Weeks Before Your Procedure

Ask about your medications
You may need to stop taking some of your medications before your procedure. Talk with your doctor about which medications are safe for you to stop taking. We have included some common examples below.

Don’t stop taking any of your medications without talking with your doctor first.

Anticoagulants (blood thinners)
If you take a blood thinner (medication that affects the way your blood clots), ask the doctor who prescribes it for you when to stop taking it and how many days until you need to start again. Be sure to share this information with the doctor performing your liver biopsy. Examples of blood thinners are listed in the following table.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of Blood Thinners</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>apixaban</td>
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<tr>
<td>dalteparin</td>
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<tr>
<td>meloxicam (Mobic®)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ticagrelor</td>
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<td>(Eliquis®)</td>
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<tr>
<td>aspirin</td>
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<tr>
<td>celecoxib (Celebrex®)</td>
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<tr>
<td>cilostazol (Pletal®)</td>
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<td>clopidogrel (Plavix®)</td>
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<td>dabigatran (Pradaxa®)</td>
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Please read the resource *Common Medications Containing Aspirin and Other Nonsteroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs)* ([www.mskcc.org/pe/common_meds](http://www.mskcc.org/pe/common_meds)). It has important information about medications you’ll need to avoid before your procedure and what medications you can take instead.

**Medications for diabetes**

If you take insulin or other medications for diabetes, ask the doctor who prescribes the medication what you should do the morning of your procedure. You may need to change the dose before your procedure.

**1 Week Before Your Procedure**
Stop Taking Certain Medications
Stop taking nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®) or naproxen (Aleve®) 7 days before your liver biopsy. If you’re having pain or discomfort, take acetaminophen (Tylenol®) instead. Don’t take more acetaminophen than directed by your doctor.

Stop Taking Herbal Remedies and Other Dietary Supplements
Stop taking any herbal remedies and supplements (such as fish oil, vitamin E, and ginkgo biloba) 7 days before your procedure. For more information, read the resource Herbal Remedies and Cancer Treatment ([www.mskcc.org/pe/herbal_remedies](http://www.mskcc.org/pe/herbal_remedies)).

Get a letter from your doctor, if necessary
If you have an automatic implantable cardioverter-defibrillator (AICD), you will need to get a clearance letter (a letter that says you can have the procedure) from your cardiologist (heart doctor) before your procedure.

Arrange for someone to take you home
You must have a responsible care partner take you home after your procedure. Make sure to plan this before the day of your procedure.

If you don’t have someone to take you home, call one of the agencies below. They will send someone to go home with you. There’s usually a charge for this service, and you will need to provide transportation.
Agencies in New York

Partners in Care: 888-735-8913

Caring People: 877-227-4649

Agencies in New Jersey

Caring People: 877-227-4649

3 Days Before Your Procedure

You will get a call from an endoscopy nurse. The nurse will review the instructions in this resource with you and ask you questions about your medical history. They will also review your medications and tell you which to take the morning of your procedure.

The Day Before Your Procedure

Note the time of your procedure

A staff member from the Admitting Office will call you after 12:00 PM the day before your procedure. The staff member will tell you what time you should arrive at the hospital for your procedure. If your procedure is scheduled for a Monday, you will be called on the Friday before. If you don’t receive a call by 4:00 PM, please call 212-639-7882.

If you need to cancel your procedure for any reason, please call the doctor who scheduled it for you.
Instructions for eating and drinking before your surgery

- Do not eat anything after midnight the night before your surgery. This includes hard candy and gum.
- Between midnight and up until 2 hours before your scheduled arrival time, you may drink a total of 12 ounces of water (see figure).
- Starting 2 hours before your scheduled arrival time, do not eat or drink anything. This includes water.

The Day of Your Procedure

Things to remember

- Take only the medications you were instructed to take the morning of your procedure. Take them with a few sips of water. This counts towards your 12-ounce limit.
- Don’t put on any lotion, cream, powder, make-up, or perfume.
- Don’t wear any metal objects. Remove any jewelry, including body piercings.
- Leave all valuables, such as credit cards and jewelry, at home.
- If you wear contact lenses, wear your glasses instead.
What to bring

- A list of the medications you take at home, including patches and creams.
- Medications for chest pain or breathing problems (such as inhalers), if you take any.
- A case for your personal items (such as eyeglasses, hearing aid(s), dentures, prosthetic device(s), wig, and religious articles), if you have one.
- Your Health Care Proxy form and other advance directives if you have completed them.

Parking when you arrive

MSK’s parking garage is located on East 66th Street between York and First Avenues. If you have questions about prices, call 212-639-2338.

To reach the garage, turn onto East 66th Street from York Avenue. The garage is located about a quarter of a block in from York Avenue, on the right-hand (north) side of the street. There is a pedestrian tunnel that you can walk through that connects the garage to the hospital.

There are also other garages located on East 69th Street.
between First and Second Avenues, East 67th Street between York and First Avenues, and East 65th Street between First and Second Avenues.

Where to go
Your procedure will be done in the Endoscopy Suites in the main building of MSK. The building is located at:

Presurgical Center (PSC) on the 2nd floor
1275 York Avenue (between East 67th and East 68th Streets)
New York, NY 10065
Take the M Elevators to the 2nd floor

What to expect
Once you arrive at the hospital, doctors, nurses, and other staff members will ask you to state and spell your name and date of birth many times. This is for your safety. People with the same or similar names may be having procedures on the same day.

After changing into a hospital gown, you will meet your nurse. Your nurse will place an intravenous (IV) catheter (thin flexible tube) into a vein, usually in your hand or arm. You will receive fluids through the IV, and it will be used later to give you anesthesia (medication to make you sleepy). Your doctor will explain the procedure and answer your questions, if you have them.

When it’s time for your procedure, you will be brought into the procedure room and helped onto an exam table. You will be attached to equipment to monitor your heart, breathing, and
blood pressure. You will also receive oxygen through your nose. You will lie on your back, with your right arm raised with your right hand resting next to your head.

You will receive medication through your IV, which will make you relaxed and sleepy. Once you’re comfortable, your doctor will give you an injection (shot) of a medication to numb the right side of your abdomen (belly). Some people say they feel pressure when the needle is inserted, but you shouldn’t feel pain. You will have a small bandage on the biopsy site when it’s finished.

**After Your Procedure**

**In the recovery room**
You’ll wake up in the recovery room, where you’ll stay in bed for 4 to 6 hours. Your nurse will continue to monitor your heart, breathing, and blood pressure. Tell your nurse if you have any discomfort, shortness of breath, or dizziness.

When you’re ready to leave the hospital, your nurse will remove your IV. Your nurse will explain your discharge instructions to both you and your care partner before you go home.

**At home**
For the first 24 hours after your biopsy:

- Don’t drink alcohol.
- Keep your biopsy site dry.
- Rest.
For at least 3 days after your biopsy:

- Don’t do any strenuous activities.
- Don’t lift anything heavier than 10 pounds (4.5 kilograms).
- Don’t vacuum, garden, or play sports.

For the rest of the week after your biopsy, you can slowly go back to your normal activities. Don’t lift anything heavier than about 15 pounds (6.8 kilograms) during this time.

Don’t take any medications that may thin your blood until your doctor tells you it’s safe.

**Do not take:**

- Aspirin and other NSAIDs
- Blood thinners
- Herbal remedies and supplements
- Vitamin E

Read the section “Ask about your medications” for examples of NSAIDs, blood thinners, and herbal remedies and supplements.

**Call Your Doctor or Nurse If You Have:**

- Chest pain or trouble breathing
- A fever of 101° F (38.3° C) or higher
- Severe pain at the biopsy site, shoulder, or abdomen (belly)
- Swelling or hardness near your abdomen or biopsy site
• Bleeding from the biopsy site
• Blood in your vomit (throw up)
• Blood in your stool (poop) or black, tarry stool
• Weakness, faintness, or sweating
• Heart palpitations (feeling like your heart is beating too fast, too hard, or fluttering)
• Any of the following signs of infection or bleeding at the biopsy site:
  - Increased warmth
  - Redness
  - Drainage
  - Bluish color

If you have any questions, contact a member of your healthcare team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5:00 PM, during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.