

Muscle Biopsy

What is a muscle biopsy?

A muscle biopsy is used by Metabolic Doctors to diagnose a mitochondrial condition. The test is performed if your doctor thinks the energy producing structure of your child's cells (mitochondria) are not functioning properly. A small cut is made in your child's skin and a little piece of muscle is taken from your child's thigh. This cut is stitched with dissolving stitches which do not need to be removed. The biopsy is carried out in the operating theatre while your child is asleep.

The biopsy will be sent to a specialised laboratory in England where the cells are looked at under a microscope.

What happens before the admission to hospital?

When your child is seen in the Metabolic Outpatient's Department, you should discuss with the doctor what medication your child is taking and if any changes are needed. If your child is taking co-enzyme Q this will have to be stopped 3 weeks before the biopsy is taken. Your child should not have Ibuprofen or other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications (check with your pharmacist) 3 days before they are due to come in for the biopsy without speaking to the one of the metabolic doctors.

Day of admission:

Your child will be admitted to the hospital the afternoon before the biopsy. You will be sent a letter with the date and time to come in. Please ring the bed manager in the morning before you leave to make sure a bed is available for your child 01 8784200.

When you arrive on the ward you will meet one of the doctors who will explain what will happen. It is important to tell if your child has any allergies or if they are taking any medication (bring your child's medication with you).

Your child will have a general anaesthetic for the biopsy. They will be fasting for 6 hours beforehand. If your child has had low blood sugars in the past they will need to have a "drip" (intravenous cannula).

What are the risks?

As with all anaesthetics, there is a small risk of complications which the anaesthetist will discuss with you. Sometimes after an anaesthetic children may vomit, have a headache, sore throat, dizziness or be generally upset. These usually pass within a few hours. If not, contact your GP.

Will it be sore?

Your child will have received pain relief in theatre which will last for several hours but the biopsy site may remain sore for longer. You will be told when they can have more pain relief. When your child is discharged, you can give them Ibuprofen or Paracetamol, following the instructions on the bottle.

Your child will be discharged from hospital generally 4 hours after their biopsy is taken once they are eating, drinking and have passed urine. You will be given an appointment for outpatients before you leave or it will be posted at a later date.

What care does the site of the muscle biopsy need when at home?

The dressing should be left on your child's biopsy site for 5 days unless it becomes wet, dirty or soiled. If this happens, wash your hands before and after reapplying a new dressing. When washing, avoid wetting the dressing. Do not shower or bath for 5 days. After 5 days remove the dressing and wash as normal and apply a normal plaster. The skin biopsy site should have healed within 7- 10 days

Watch your child's wound for signs of an infection listed below ;

- Redness
- Swelling
- Pain or soreness getting worse or not going away
- Ooze (it is normal to see a little bit of blood coming through the dressing immediately after the muscle biopsy is taken)
- Soreness
- Itching
- High temperature or off their food.

If you notice any of the signs above please visit your GP or contact one of the nurses in the Metabolic Unit 01 8784646 or 01 8784409 Monday - Thursday 9am- 4pm and 9am - 2pm Friday.

Your child may attend school the next day but should not take part in contact sports or swimming for at least 2 weeks after the biopsy and the wound has completely healed.

How long will the results take?

The results of the biopsy can take 4 months to 1 year. If a result is sent to the consultant before this you will be contacted.

Remember use the time your child is theatre to write on a piece of paper any questions you may have for the doctor or nurse.



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