

What is a Liver Biopsy?

A liver biopsy is a procedure where a specially trained doctor uses a special needle to get a sample of your liver tissue to examine under a microscope. This liver tissue allows the doctor to see if your liver is healthy or to better understand what the reasons are if you have liver damage or disease.

Using the results from the liver biopsy, your doctor will see:

- Any liver disease or damage
- Any abnormalities like a tumor or infection
- Ongoing conditions like hepatitis or liver scar tissue (cirrhosis)

How is a Liver Biopsy Performed?

There are two ways to do a liver biopsy. Your doctor will discuss with you what kind of biopsy is best.

- The most common way uses a special needle to remove the tissue through a very small incision in the skin.
- Less often, the doctor does a liver biopsy through a vein in your neck (transjugular vein).

Pre-Register by Phone

Pre-registration is a two-step process that is necessary for you to complete before having a liver biopsy at California Pacific Medical Center.



Please call us at (415) 600-2500 to speak with an admitting representative as soon as your liver biopsy is scheduled. The admitting staff works to help you complete any necessary registration forms and insurance information by phone.

Before the Procedure

- Do not eat anything for 6 hours before your procedure or drink anything for 3 hours before your biopsy. (You may drink clear liquids such as apple juice, Gatorade, ginger ale, or water for up to 3 hours before your procedure.)
- Your doctor may give you additional instructions for this procedure. Please read them carefully.

Medication Note: Ask your doctor if and when you should stop taking your usual medications, including vitamins, over-the-counter medications, and herbal supplements.

- It is important to tell your doctor if you are taking any blood-thinning medications, such as Aspirin, Coumadin (Warfarin), Lovenox (Enoxaparin) or Plavix (Clopidogrel). Your doctor may tell you to stop taking these medications one week before your biopsy.
- If you are taking any pain medications, such as Motrin/Advil (Ibuprofen), your doctor may tell you to stop taking these medications one week before your biopsy.
- If you are diabetic, do not take your diabetes medications on the day of your procedure because you will not be eating (fasting).

Where Do I Go to For My Liver Biopsy?

Your doctor tells you where your biopsy is done. A liver biopsy may be done on either the California or Pacific Campus. Make sure you know the exact location (campus) and department (floor) where your liver biopsy procedure will be performed.

<p><u>CALIFORNIA Campus</u> GI Lab 3700 California Street Parking: 3838 California St., 3905 Sacramento St., 460 Cherry St., or 3698 California St.</p>	<p><u>PACIFIC Campus</u> Ambulatory Care Unit 2351 Clay Street, 6th Floor Parking: 2405 Clay St. @ Webster St. (There is no validation for parking.)</p>
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On the Day of the Procedure

- **Please arrive 2 hours before your scheduled procedure.**
- **Come to the hospital with a family member or support person who can drive you home.** You may not drive or take a cab home alone after this procedure.
- **Bring your insurance information and a list (or the bottles) of medications you are taking** including vitamins, over-the-counter medications, and herbal supplements.
- The doctor may do an ultrasound or CT scan before or during the procedure to find the best place to do the biopsy. This may be done by an ultrasound technologist in the radiology (x-ray) department **or** by your doctor right before the procedure. If it is done in radiology, the technician will give you a report with instructions for your doctor. Take this with you to the GI Lab for your procedure.
- **Signing the consent form:** The doctor explains the procedure to you and asks you to sign a consent form stating that you understand the procedure. This is a good time to ask questions and share any concerns you may have.
- If you have any questions about your liver biopsy, contact your doctor. You may also call the California Campus GI Lab at (415) 600-2570 or the Pacific Campus GI Lab at (415) 600-3478.
- Plan to stay for 2 hours after your biopsy.

During the Procedure

- **The Registered Nurse (RN) places an intravenous line (IV) in your arm.** The IV allows the doctor/RN to give you medications for your comfort or to take any blood tests if needed.
- You are placed on monitors that measure your blood pressure, pulse, and oxygen level.
- The doctor will ask you to lie flat with your right arm above your head. The doctor cleans the area for the biopsy and injects a local anesthetic around the insertion site. He/she will instruct you on breathing during the biopsy and when to hold your breath.

After Your Procedure

- **After the biopsy, you will have your blood pressure, pulse and oxygen levels checked often.** Your nurse will check the biopsy insertion site for any signs of bleeding.
- You will be allowed to drink fluids if your condition is stable. However, some patients may be asked not to eat or drink for 2 hours after the procedure.
- Your blood will be drawn after the procedure to make sure everything is normal and it is safe for you to go home.
- The biopsy insertion site will be covered by a Band-Aid® (adhesive bandage).
- The bandage can be removed after 48 hours.
- You will receive detailed instructions about how to care for yourself at home from your doctor and the nursing staff. **Note: Do not take any Aspirin or pain medication unless otherwise told by your doctor.**
- When you are ready to go home, your nurse will review a copy of your home care instructions with you. These instructions will have any changes in medications and a phone number to contact your doctor.

Call your doctor or go to the closest emergency room if you experience any of the following symptoms:

- Increased pain in the stomach, shoulder, or chest
- Bleeding from the biopsy site
- If your stomach becomes full or bloated
- Weakness, dizziness, or lightheadedness
- Shortness of breath
- Fever
- Vomiting blood or passing blood in your stools

When Will I Get the Results of My Liver Biopsy?

Often, your primary doctor gives you the final results of your biopsy within 5 days. This may also happen in a follow-up office visit after the liver specimen has been examined by the pathologist.

More Ways to Learn

- Visit the Society of Interventional Radiology Web site at www.scvir.org.
- Visit www.cpmc.org/liver.
- Go to www.cpmc.org/learning.

Frequently Asked Questions

Question: What is a liver biopsy?

Answer: A liver biopsy is a procedure where a specially trained doctor uses a special needle to get a sample of your liver tissue to examine under a microscope.

Question: Is a liver biopsy procedure painful?

Answer: During the liver biopsy procedure, the doctor injects a local anesthetic around the insertion site in your abdomen or neck for your comfort. You will be given additional medication in your IV to ensure that you are comfortable.

Question: When will I get the results of my liver biopsy?

Answer: Often, your primary doctor gives you the final results of your biopsy within 5 days. This may also happen in a follow-up office visit after the liver specimen has been examined by the pathologist.

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Note: This information is not meant to replace any information or personal medical advice which you get directly from your doctor(s). If you have any questions about this information, such as the risks or benefits of the treatment listed, please ask your doctor(s).