

### Introduction

Although blood tests and ultrasound examination provide some clues on cause of liver disease, examination of the liver tissue provides much more valuable information for diagnosis, prognosis and treatment. Patients with acute or chronic hepatitis, abnormal liver function tests, liver failure, cirrhosis etc. are candidates for liver biopsy.

### The Procedure

The doctor will make a small (about 1-2 mm) incision on the skin under local anaesthesia. Doctor will ask the patient to hold the breath while piercing through the incision site with the biopsy needle into the liver to obtain tissue. About 1-2 cm of liver tissue will be obtained. In general, the procedure takes 10-15 minutes.

### Before the Procedure

Fast for at least 6 hours before the procedure. A written consent is required. Patients with blood clotting problem, need to be corrected first with transfusion of blood products. **Inform doctors** of any major medical problems including diabetes, hypertension, and continue their medications as instructed. Provide information concerning any allergy history and current medications especially antiplatelet and anticoagulation drugs, which should be stopped or modified according to doctor's instruction.

### After the Procedure

Pulse and blood pressure will be closely monitored. Patient may resume oral feeding when the condition is stable. Avoid vigorous physical activity within 2 weeks to prevent bleeding from the wound. Follow doctors instructions regarding further use of medication. Attend follow-up appointment for the biopsy result.

### Risk and Complication

Liver biopsy has been shown to be safe and complications are uncommon. About 20% of the patients have mild pain in upper abdomen for several minutes to several hours after the procedure. A small number of patients have transient drop of blood pressure. About 1 in every 600 patients has minor internal bleeding and about 0.3-0.5% of patients has major bleeding that requires blood transfusion. In very rare circumstances (about 0.1-0.01%), the patient may die from severe bleeding. Other complications include accidental injury of other organs like gallbladder, kidney, lung, intestine, etc. Serious complications may result in death. In case of complications, patients may need radiological or surgical intervention.

### Things to take note on discharge

Patients can call up the ward for discomfort or any questions about the examination result and drug treatment. If there are any serious events such as dizziness, collapse, severe abdominal pain, fever, etc, patients should seek medical attention at nearby Accident and Emergency Department.

### Remarks

This is general information only and the list of complications is not exhaustive. Other unforeseen complications may occasionally occur. In special patient groups, the actual risk may be different. For further information please contact your doctor. Evangel Hospital reserves the right to amend this leaflet without prior notice. We welcome suggestions or enquiries on the information provided in this leaflet. Please contact our Healthcare professionals so that we could follow up and make improvement.

### Reference

Hospital Authority: "Patient Information on Liver Biopsy" (2019)

Smart Patient: [http://www.ekg.org.hk/pilic/public/IM\\_PILIC/IM\\_liverbx\\_0047\\_eng.pdf](http://www.ekg.org.hk/pilic/public/IM_PILIC/IM_liverbx_0047_eng.pdf) (12-07-2023)