

# CHATTANOOGA ■ I M A G I N G

(423) 553-1234

Your appointment is scheduled for: Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

Ordering physician \_\_\_\_\_ Diagnosis \_\_\_\_\_

Copy of report sent to \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for choosing Chattanooga Imaging. The following information will assist you in understanding your diagnostic procedure.

## Liver Biopsy

### ***What Is a Liver Biopsy?***

In a liver biopsy, the physician examines a small piece of tissue from your liver for signs of damage or disease. A special needle is used to remove the tissue from the liver. The physician decides to do a liver biopsy after tests suggest that the liver is not functioning properly. For example, a blood test might show that your blood contains higher-than-normal levels of liver enzymes or too much iron or copper. An x-ray could suggest that the liver is swollen. Looking at the liver tissue itself is the best way to determine whether the liver is healthy or what is causing it to become damaged.

### ***What To Expect***

You will lie on an exam table, and a nurse will insert an intravenous line through which you will be given a sedative. After marking the outline of your liver and injecting a local anesthetic to numb the area, the physician will make a small incision in your right side near your rib cage, then insert the biopsy needle and retrieve a sample of liver tissue. In some cases, the physician may use an ultrasound image of the liver to help guide the needle to a specific location.

You will need to lie very still to ensure that the proper area is biopsied. The physician will ask you to hold your breath for 5 to 10 seconds while the needle is inserted into your liver. You may feel pressure and a dull pain. The entire procedure takes about 20 minutes.

After the biopsy, the physician will put a bandage over the incision and ask you to lie on your right side, pressed against a towel, for 1 to 2 hours. The nurse will monitor your vital signs and level of pain.

You will need to arrange for someone to take you home, as you will not be allowed to drive after taking the sedative. You must go directly home and remain in bed (except to use the bathroom) for 4 to 6 hours, depending on your physician's instructions. You must avoid exertion for the week following the biopsy so the incision and liver can heal. You can expect a little soreness at the incision site and possibly some pain in your right shoulder. This pain is caused by irritation of the diaphragm muscle (the pain usually radiates to the shoulder) and should disappear within a few hours or days. Your physician may recommend that you take Tylenol for pain, but you **must not** take aspirin or ibuprofen for the first week after surgery, as these medicines decrease blood clotting, which is crucial for healing.

As with any surgery, liver biopsy does have some risks, such as puncture of the lung or gallbladder, infection, bleeding, and pain, but these complications are rare.

### ***Patient Preparation***

Before scheduling your biopsy, your physician will order blood samples to make sure your blood clots properly. Be sure to mention any medications you are taking, especially those that affect blood clotting, like blood thinners. One week before the procedure, you must stop taking aspirin, ibuprofen, and anticoagulants.

You must not eat or drink anything for 8 hours before the biopsy. You should plan to arrive at the hospital about an hour before the scheduled time of your procedure. Your physician will tell you whether to take your regular medications during the fasting period and may give you other special instructions.

If you have any questions, please call us.

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