

Procedures/Diagnostic Tests

Muscle/nerve biopsy

You have been scheduled for a muscle/nerve biopsy. This procedure helps your doctor learn how well your muscles and nerves work.

Before the procedure, your doctor will talk to you about it and answer your questions. When you understand what will happen, you will be asked to sign a consent form giving us permission to do the biopsy.

Name
Date/Time of procedure
Location: NIH, 2nd floor operating room

Preparation

Within 7 days of the biopsy:

You will need to have these tests: routine blood work (CBC, Chem20, PT/PTT), urinalysis. An EKG and chest x-ray will be done if needed.

2 - 3 days before the biopsy:

- Do not take aspirin, or products containing aspirin (such as cough or cold medicine).
- If you take Coumadin or any other “blood thinner,” you must stop taking it before your biopsy. *Do this **only** under the care of your primary care doctor, not on your own.*

Your primary care doctor should:

- check your clotting times 1 to 2 days before your biopsy, and
- fax your results to us.
- Do not take NSAIDS (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as Motrin, Advil, Ibuprofen, Indocin, Naprosyn).

The evening before and morning of the biopsy:

- **Do not eat or drink anything after midnight of the morning of your biopsy.** However, if your doctor permits, you may take a sip of water with your morning medications.

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- Shower with an antibacterial soap the evening before or the morning of your biopsy. If you prefer, you may wash only the biopsy site.
 - You will be asked to sign an informed consent form which gives us permission to do the biopsy and shows that you understand the procedure.
 - Before you go to the operating room, please take off jewelry, make-up, nail polish, dentures, hearing aides, glasses, or contact lenses.

Procedure

- The doctor will inject a local anesthetic just under the skin along the muscle or nerve. You will feel a slight burning during this injection.
- Then, the doctor will make a small cut, called an incision. This incision will be about 1-inch long.
- Through this incision, the doctor will remove small tissue samples. These samples will be about the size of a lima bean.
- During the procedure you may feel some pressure, tugging, and discomfort. The discomfort will not last long.
- When the biopsy is taken, the doctor will close the incision with sutures (stitches). You may see small knots of sutures at the biopsy site. **DO NOT REMOVE THEM.** They will dissolve on their own. "Steri-strips" will also be placed over the biopsy site.
- A large bandage will be placed over the Steri-strips and an Ace bandage or Coban will be put on top to keep the bandage in place.

After the procedure

For the next 24 hours:

- Keep your arm or leg raised as often as you can.
- If you had a muscle biopsy in your arm, avoid lifting heavy things (over 5 pounds).
- If you had a muscle biopsy in your leg, avoid stepping heavily or walking a lot (more than a quarter mile).
- You may take Tylenol, Motrin, or Advil for discomfort as directed by your doctor or nurse.
- You may remove the Ace bandage or Coban before you go to bed the night of surgery.

Self care at after the procedure

For 2 days after surgery:

- **Keep the incision dry.** Wrap the site with plastic wrap and tape the top and bottom to avoid getting it wet during bathing.

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- In 1 or 2 days you may remove the 4x4 bandage over the incision. You will see the steri-strips across the incision. *Do not remove them.* The Steri-strips will fall off in 7 to 10 days.

3 days after surgery:

- You may shower or wash your arm or leg with soap and water.
- Check the biopsy site daily for these signs of infection:
 - excessive redness
 - tenderness, swelling
 - steady or increased pain
 - warm skin (warmer than usual) around the incision
 - a lot of drainage (a slight amount of hardness, redness, and pink-tinged drainage may be normal)

If you see any of these signs, contact the neuromuscular diseases fellow: call the page operator at 301-496-1211 and ask to have this doctor paged.

Special instructions

- If you were taking aspirin before your biopsy, you may begin taking aspirin again 1 day after the biopsy.
- After 7 to 10 days, you may resume your normal activities as tolerated. If you have any problems, please contact your local doctor. Then call the Neuromuscular Diseases Section doctor or research nurse at: **301-496-9979** between 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

After these hours or on the weekends and holidays, call the NIH page operator at **301-496-1211**.

This information is prepared specifically for persons taking part in clinical research at the National Institutes of Health Clinical Center and may not apply to patients elsewhere. If you have questions about the information presented here, talk to a member of your health care team.

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National Institutes of Health Clinical Center
Bethesda, MD 20892

Questions about the Clinical Center?
<http://www.cc.nih.gov/comments.shtml>
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