

# **Bone Marrow Biopsy**

## **What is a bone marrow biopsy?**

A bone marrow biopsy is a test that tells us about the part of your body where blood is made. Bone marrow makes red blood cells, white blood cells, and platelets. Red blood cells carry oxygen. White blood cells help fight infections. Platelets help stop bleeding. A bone marrow biopsy is done when blood tests show that there are too many or too few of these cells. A bone marrow biopsy may also be done to check the effect of treatment.

This test usually has two steps. First, a small piece of the solid part of the bone marrow is removed. Then, a small amount of the fluid part of the bone marrow is removed.

This test is usually done at the back side of the hipbone, just above the buttocks. In some cases the test is done on both sides of the hipbones.

## **Getting Ready**

You can eat and drink as usual before a bone marrow biopsy, unless your doctor tells you something else. Take your regular medications. You may want to have a family member or friend with you. If you are an outpatient, arrange for someone to drive you home after the biopsy.

## **What to Expect**

If you are an outpatient, report to Ward 4E (Short Stay Clinic) on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor, at your scheduled time. Tell the secretary that you have an appointment for a bone marrow biopsy. A nurse will check you in and call for the bone marrow team. If you would like pain/anxiety medication before the biopsy please ask for it. Pain/anxiety medication is often not given unless you ask.

If you are an inpatient, the bone marrow team will come to your room.

There will be at least two people on the bone marrow team. Some blood will be taken from your finger. Then you will be asked to lie on your stomach. If you cannot lie on your stomach, you may be able to lie on your side. Pillows and pads can be used to make you more comfortable.

The area above your buttocks is cleaned with a brown liquid soap to kill germs. The soap may feel cold. A cloth will be placed around this area. This is where the test is done.

You will be given a shot to numb the test area. You will notice a burning feeling and then the area will be numb.

When the area is numb, a large needle is used to remove the solid part of the bone marrow. You may feel some pain, but most people feel some discomfort, pressure, and pushing. Some people feel like they have bubbles or gas.

Then, a smaller needle is used to remove some of the fluid part of the bone marrow. You may feel some discomfort. Some people have an odd pulling feeling that lasts a few seconds, as the fluid leaves the bone marrow.

When the test is finished, the area is cleaned with alcohol. Then a pressure bandage is applied to the area. Keep this bandage on until the next day.

If you are an outpatient, you will stay on 4E. A nurse will take your blood pressure and pulse. You will rest on your back for about an hour. Before you leave, a nurse will check your bandage. If you received pain/anxiety medication before the biopsy an adult family member or friend must drive you home. If there is no one available to drive you home you will have to stay on 4E for 8 hours.

If you are an inpatient, your nurse will check your blood pressure, pulse, and the bandage. You will be asked to rest on your back for about an hour.

## **Going Home**

Keep the bandage dry. Check your bandage every once in a while when you get home or have someone else check it for you. You might see a small amount of blood. If you have bright red bleeding that does not stop, call the Hematology/Oncology provider line at (612) 467-9611 and leave a message, a provider will be paged to return your call. For immediate help, go to the Urgent Care Area.

You should also call the provider line or go to the Urgent Care Area, if you:

- Have chills or a temperature above 100°
- See pus or swelling with redness in the biopsy area
- Have pain that does not improve by the next day

The Hematology/Oncology provider line hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. At any other time, call (612) 725-2000 and ask to speak to the Hematology/Oncology doctor on call.

Do not do any heavy work or lifting for at least one day after the biopsy. This will help you heal.

You can take a shower when you remove the bandage but wait two days before taking a tub bath.

Your doctor will call you if there is a concern with the biopsy results. Otherwise, you will get the results at your next clinic appointment.

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