

What is a liver biopsy?

A liver biopsy is a procedure done to obtain a small sample of the liver so it can be examined under a microscope. A liver biopsy can help your child's doctor identify problems in the liver, find the cause of liver disease, and/or determine how much damage is in the liver.

Discharge from the hospital

Most children who have a liver biopsy go home the same day. This usually happens six to 24 hours after the biopsy. It differs depending on the age and health of the child, and the reason for the biopsy.

Your child will be closely monitored until they can safely go home.

Care at home

- **Dressing care**
Leave the dressing on for 24 hours. If the dressing gets wet or soiled before then, remove it and replace it with a clean, dry bandage. Your child may also have a bruise at the biopsy site, which can take up to 10 days to go away.
- **Bathing**
Your child can bath or shower the day (24 hours) after the biopsy. However in the first 24 hours it is very important to keep the bandage dry or replace it if it gets wet. A wet bandage can contribute to delayed healing and increase the risk of infection.
- **Meals**
If your child is feeling well enough after the sedation or anesthesia, they can return to normal eating. It is also important to encourage your child to drink plenty of fluids for two days (48 hours) after the procedure.
- **Pain relief**
Give your child acetaminophen for pain if your child's doctor allows it. Do not give your child any medicines that will thin the blood, such as ASA (Aspirin) or ibuprofen, without checking with a nurse or your child's doctor first.
Some children may feel pain or discomfort after the liver biopsy for the first day or two. If this happens, give your child acetaminophen as directed by your child's doctor.
- **Physical activity**

After the biopsy, your child will need to be quiet, stay home from school or daycare, and avoid physical activity for the first two days (48 hours). Your child may return to school two days after the biopsy with restricted activity. Your child should avoid for two full weeks any major activity or physical exertion, such as:

- 1) contact sports
- 2) Gymnastics
- 3) Diving, swimming
- 4) Bicycle riding
- 5) Soccer
- 6) Rollerblading
- 7) Hockey
- 8) skiing
- 9) Horseback riding.

When to see a doctor

After discharge, you should call your doctor or nurse or go to the emergency room if your child develops any of the following:

- bleeding from the site of the biopsy that soaks through the bandage
- persistent abdominal or chest pain (shoulder pain up to two weeks after the biopsy)
- throwing up (vomiting) blood or vomiting that does not stop
- pale skin, weakness or dizziness
- passage of tarry black stools
- fever higher than 38°C (100.4°F)
- redness, tenderness and/or swelling at the biopsy site
- severe pain
- swelling in the tummy
- general weakness

Key points

- Leave dressing on for 24 hours.
- You may give your child acetaminophen for pain if your child's doctor allows it.
- Avoid major physical activity for two weeks.
- Go to the nearest Emergency Department if your child develops bleeding at the biopsy site, vomits blood or has blood in their bowel movements, is pale, tired, or has severe abdominal pain.