
AGIS Alexandria GastroIntestinal Specialists

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Your liver biopsy is on _____ at _____, located at Cabrini radiology.

What is a Liver Biopsy?

A liver biopsy is a minor procedure which involves removing a small sample of liver using a needle device. Since the liver is located in the right side of the abdomen, a biopsy is usually performed by going in between the ribs on the right side of the abdomen or the lower chest. In some people the liver location may vary and a biopsy may be performed from the front, below the ribs or from the back, in between the ribs.

Biopsy Procedure

The biopsy site will be anesthetized (numbed) with a local anesthetic (be sure to let your physician know if you have ever had a reaction to a lidocaine injection before). After numbing the area with local anesthetic, the biopsy needle will be inserted and the procedure performed. The actual biopsy takes about 1 second to be performed. Occasionally pain or pressure is felt in the right side or the pit of your stomach. Sometimes 1-4 additional biopsies may need to be performed in order to get enough tissue to make a diagnosis.

Preparation for the Biopsy

- * You cannot have anything to eat or drink after midnight on night before the procedure.
- * If you are on Aspirin or any blood thinners (Coumadin or Plavix), you must STOP taking them 7 days prior to the biopsy.

Following the Procedure

Following the biopsy you will be asked to lay on your right side for 1-2 hours. This is done to help seal the small needle hole in the liver. Most patients have no pain after the biopsy. Some people experience mild pain in their right side, neck or shoulder. This pain generally lasts no more than several hours and is relieved with mild pain medication. The pain may worsen with movement or deep breathing. If you should experience pain after your biopsy, try to lay still. To help with the pain you may take Tylenol. Since you may have received sedation or pain medication after your biopsy, you are not permitted to drive until the next day. Please make sure you have someone with you to drive you home.

Contact your physician's office at (318)448-5310 if you experience severe pain, fever, or shortness of breath after your procedure; ask for Tabbie or Sandra. After office hours, call (318)448-5310 and ask to speak to the GI doctor on call.