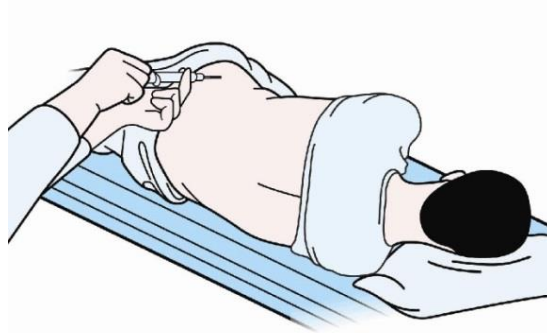


# Bone Marrow Biopsy



**This leaflet explains about your appointment for a Bone Marrow Biopsy including what to expect and how to look after yourself before and after the procedure. If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.**

## What is bone marrow?

Bone marrow is a sponge-like material found inside certain bones of the body. Blood cells are made in the bone marrow. Blood is made up of three main types of cells: red blood cells, white blood cells and platelets and disorders affecting any of these cell types can be assessed by examining a sample of the bone marrow.

## What is a bone marrow biopsy?

In a bone marrow test a sample of bone marrow is taken from inside the bone. This is usually taken from the back of the pelvic bone.

## How is the bone marrow test done?

The doctor or nurse will discuss the procedure with you. This will give you the opportunity to ask questions and you will be asked to sign a consent form.

You will be asked to lie on your side with your knees bent up and your clothing loosened to expose your back at the top of your pelvic bone. Your skin will be cleaned with an antiseptic solution. Local anaesthetic will then be injected into the skin over the back of the pelvic bone to numb the area where the sample is to be taken.

Once the area is numb, a needle will be passed through the skin into the bone and a sample of liquid marrow will be drawn up into the syringe. This is called bone marrow aspirate.

Sometimes a second needle is used to take another sample of the more solid bone marrow tissue. This is called a bone marrow trephine.

A small dressing will be placed over the site. You should then lie on the bed for a few minutes to recover and prevent further bleeding.

### **How long will the procedure take?**

The whole procedure usually takes 25-45 minutes. You should allow up to one hour for the procedure as the nurses will need to take a blood test from you before or after the procedure.

### **What happens afterwards?**

Once the doctor or nurse feels that you have recovered, you will be ready to go. After this you will be able to eat and drink normally and visit the toilet. It is important to keep the dressing dry for 24 hours after the procedure. This is to prevent infection.

It is not uncommon for a small amount of blood to stain the dressing. If this happens, please apply pressure to the area. Please ask for a spare dressing to take home. If the bleeding continues, you should contact the haematology department for advice. After 24 hours you can wash as normal and no further dressing should be needed.

### **Can I continue my usual medication?**

Before the procedure is planned, please let your doctor know if you are taking an anticoagulant (such as warfarin, rivaroxaban, apixaban or edoxaban) or any other medicines that thin the blood (such as aspirin or clopidogrel). Your doctor will give you advice on when they should be stopped. If you are taking warfarin or certain other similar medicines, you will have your blood clotting (INR) checked just before the procedure at the haematology day unit.

If you are taking these and the doctor has not given you any advice on stopping them, please call 020 8725 1680 to discuss with the Haematology Day Unit prior to your appointment.

### **Are there any risks?**

As with any procedure involving a tissue biopsy, there is a small risk of bleeding from the puncture site. There is also a small risk that the needle puncture site could become infected after the procedure. We take extreme care to keep the procedure sterile to minimise this risk.

### **Does it hurt?**

We aim to make this procedure as pain free as possible. The local anaesthetic causes a stinging sensation before the skin starts to feel numb and some patients report a brief sharp

pain as the bone marrow is drawn into the syringe. This pain does not last for more than a few seconds. If you have a bone marrow trephine, there may be a dull ache afterwards.

Occasionally during the procedure, you may feel a tingling sensation in your leg.

As the local anaesthetic wears off after an hour or so, many patients feel a bruised or aching sensation over the site of the biopsy. This is usually relieved by taking paracetamol.

### **Will I be able to drive home?**

You will be able to drive yourself home. You may prefer to bring someone to be with you on the day and drive you home. You will be advised to avoid any strenuous exercise for a day or so after the procedure.

### **Do I need to bring someone with me?**

It is not necessary to bring someone with you. However, some people find it reassuring to have another person with them.

### **When will I get the results?**

Results are dependent on what sort of test you have had and you will usually be given the results at your next clinic appointment.

### **Do I need to bring anything?**

You do not need to bring anything to your appointment. We can provide food and drink in the unit for you.

### **Where is it done?**

The bone marrow aspiration procedure is performed in the

Ruth Myles Day Unit  
Second Floor, St James' Wing  
St George's Hospital

### **Contact us**

The Day Unit is open Monday to Friday 9pm-5pm  
Our contact numbers are:  
020 8725 1680 / 3607

**For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [www.stgeorges.nhs.uk](http://www.stgeorges.nhs.uk)**

## Additional services

### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or care. You can contact the PALS team on the advisory telephone line Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 2pm to 5pm.

A Walk-in service is available:

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday between 10am and 4pm

Friday between 10am and 2pm.

The Walk-in and Advisory telephone services are closed on Wednesdays.

Please contact PALS in advance to check if there are any changes to opening times.

PALS is based within the hospital in the ground floor main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings.

**Tel:** 020 8725 2453 **Email:** [pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk)

### NHS UK

The NHS provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

**Web:** [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

### NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

**Tel:** 111

### AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website ([www.accessable.co.uk](http://www.accessable.co.uk)). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.



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