

Having a Bone Marrow Biopsy

Haematology Unit Patient Information Leaflet



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If you'd like a large print, audio, Braille or a translated version of this leaflet then please call:

01253 955588

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What is Bone Marrow?

Bone marrow is located in some of the flat bones of the body such as the breast bone and the pelvic bone. It is the site where many of the circulating blood cells in the body (red cells, white cells and platelets) are made. It can give us important information about disorders of these blood cells.

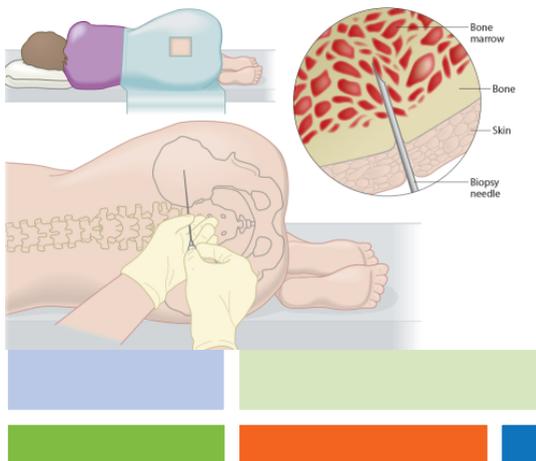
Why do you need a Bone Marrow Biopsy, what are the benefits?

The bone marrow biopsy is used to determine the cause of abnormalities noted within the blood. Samples may be taken to:

- Detect any abnormal cells in the bone marrow.
- See if the bone marrow is making new cells properly.
- Determine how far certain blood diseases have progressed.
- Assess the effect of treatment on the bone marrow including to see if any previously abnormal cells have gone.

Are there any alternatives to a Bone Marrow Biopsy?

At present there are no alternatives. This is a test required to make a diagnosis of a bone marrow disorder.



How are samples taken?

Samples are usually taken from the back of the pelvic bone at the hip. We would ask you to lie on your side and lower your clothes at the waist to allow access to the hip bone. A local anaesthetic is given to numb the area, a needle is inserted and samples are taken. The procedure can cause an unpleasant feeling of pressure, discomfort or a dull pain as the samples are taken but this is a temporary sensation. The procedure is usually done as an outpatient and takes about fifteen minutes. It is done by a doctor or specialist nurse who has undertaken specific training for the procedure. The room we use is quite small but, if you like, one relative or friend can come into the room with you.

What are the risks / possible side effects?

The procedure itself may be uncomfortable as the needle enters the bone marrow cavity but this is a temporary sensation. Bleeding and bruising may occur. Very rarely, bleeding may occur which may require a blood transfusion. There is a very small risk of local infection occurring. The procedure is undertaken in a sterile manner and the site will be covered with a sterile dressing afterwards.

What preparation is needed before the test?

You may eat and drink as normal before and after the test. You may need a blood test shortly before to check if your blood will clot. If you take medication such as warfarin or heparin that affect blood clotting, you may be advised to stop taking or reduce the dose of the medicine for one week before the test.

After the procedure

You may have some discomfort or bruising for a few days which you can ease by taking simple painkillers such as paracetamol. The dressing can be removed after 24 hours. Your results will be available in approximately 14 days.



Useful contact details

Haematology Clinical Nurse Specialists

Monday - Friday 08.30-16.30

Tel. 01253 955712/ 956747 / 951180

Hospital Switchboard: **01253 300000**

Patient Relations Department

The Patient Relations Department offer impartial advice and deal with any concerns or complaints the Trust receives. You can contact them via:

Tel: **01253 955589**

email: **patient.relations@bfwh.nhs.uk**

You can also write to us at:

**Patient Relations Department, Blackpool Victoria Hospital,
Whinney Heys Road, Blackpool FY3 8NR**

Further information is available on our website: **www.bfwh.nhs.uk**

References

This leaflet is evidence based wherever the appropriate evidence is available, and represents an accumulation of expert opinion and professional interpretation.

Details of the references used in writing this leaflet are available on request from: **Procedural Document and Leaflet Coordinator 01253 953397**

Approved by: Clinical Improvement (CA)
Date of Publication: 21/09/2015
Reference No: Ic00008791 - PL/030 V2
Author: Jessica Jones
Review Date: 01/09/2018

