

Your bone marrow test

Cancer Services and Clinical Haematology

Produced: Oct 2020

Information for patients

Review: Oct 2023

Leaflet number: 736 Version: 6

Why do I need a bone marrow test?

This test involves looking at the bone marrow to see if there are any abnormal cells and how the normal cells are working.

Do I need to do anything before the test?

You can eat and drink as usual before your test. If you are on warfarin, you will need to stop taking this three days before your bone marrow test. If you are taking dabigatran, rivaroxaban, apixaban or edoxaban you will need to stop taking these for 24 hours before the test.

What does the procedure involve?

The whole procedure usually takes about fifteen minutes.

The nurse or doctor will need to expose a small area of the back of your hip called the posterior iliac crest. This is where the bone marrow sample is taken from. You will be asked to lie on a bed, on whichever side is most comfortable for you, with your knees bent towards your chest. Your skin will be numbed with an injection of local anaesthetic. A needle is introduced into the bone cavity, where the bone marrow is made, using a powered driver, and between 1ml and 10mls of fluid are sucked out with a syringe, depending upon the tests required. This can sometimes be painful, but only lasts a few seconds. This is the **bone marrow aspirate**.

Then the nurse or doctor will then go deeper with the same needle to take a small core of the bone. This is the **trephine** and it takes a little longer than the aspirate and can cause nerve pain. Again, this should only last for a few seconds. Afterwards you will be asked to lie flat on your back for a few minutes to stop any bleeding that may occur.

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

Will I be offered any pain relief?

Most people will be offered Entonox. However, if you have had a recent head injury or suffer with breathing problems, Entonox may not be right for you. You do not have to have Entonox.

What is Entonox?

Entonox gas is a mixture of nitrous oxide gas and oxygen. It is commonly used to relieve pain during labour and pregnancy, but it can be used as short-term pain relief in other situations, such as bone marrow tests. Entonox is a very safe painkiller, which acts quickly, and is removed from the body very fast, with no long-term side effects.

What are the side effects of Entonox?

Some patients feel light-headed and dizzy. These effects do not last for more than a few minutes.

How do I use Entonox?

You will be given a mouthpiece to hold. When you have any discomfort, breathe deeply from the mouthpiece. This will release the Entonox for you to breathe in. As soon as you no longer have any pain, release the mouthpiece and breathe in normal air. Do not worry that you are taking in too much Entonox, as once you release the mouthpiece, the effect of the Entonox will wear off.

Can I drive after having Entonox?

Your body gets rid of the gas very quickly, so it will be safe to drive after 30 minutes.

What are the risks and benefits of the test?

The associated risks are very rare, but occasionally you might get bleeding or infection at the site, or lower back ache. There may also be a small amount of bruising, which will fade in time.

The benefit of this procedure is to obtain an accurate diagnosis. If you have already received treatment, the test can tell us how effective this treatment has been.

How do I find out the results of the test?

You will be given an appointment to come back for the results of your biopsy within a few weeks. Results from the aspirate may be available after one day, but the results from the trephine biopsy can take five days or more. The doctor may need the results from both samples before giving you the result of your bone marrow test.

What do I need to do after the test?

Immediately after the procedure there may be a small amount of blood loss. If the bleeding has not stopped after one hour, please contact us on the numbers below.

When the local anaesthetic has worn off you may experience some pain. Please follow the advice given by the doctor or nurse performing the test about what painkillers you can take.

The dressing covering the examination area can be removed the next day. If the site looks red or swollen after two or three days, or is still painful, please contact:

Osborne Day Care 0116 258 5263
Emergency Contact Number 0808 178 2212 (24 hours)

Please remember to attend your follow-up appointment.

Sources of further information

Macmillan Information and Support Centre

Leicester Royal Infirmary

Monday to Friday, 9.30 am to 4.30 pm

Telephone: 0116 258 6189
Email: cancerinfo@uhl-tr.nhs.uk
Website: www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk/cancerinfo

Macmillan Cancer Support

Freephone: 0800 808 00 00
Website: www.macmillan.org.uk

Blood Cancer UK

Helpline: 0808 2080 888
Website: www.bloodcancer.org.uk

Leukaemia Care

Freephone: 08088 010 444
Website: www.leukaemiacare.org.uk

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل

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Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

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