INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

Prostate biopsy

The aim of this leaflet is to ensure that you are fully prepared for a prostate biopsy and understand what is involved if you choose to consent to it.

What is the prostate?
The prostate is a gland that sits just below the bladder. It is normally the size and shape of a walnut. The urethra (water-pipe) passes through it. The role of the prostate is to secrete a fluid that contributes to the fertility of sperm. As you get older the prostate gland enlarges. This enlargement may cause symptoms that might not be related to prostate cancer.

There are three main types of prostate problems;

- **Benign enlargement of the prostate gland.** This is a normal age related change, which may or may not cause some urinary symptoms.
- **Inflammation of the prostate gland** (prostatitis).
- **Prostate cancer.** It is quite possible that a man with prostate cancer will not experience any symptoms.

How is the prostate examined?
Your doctor or specialist nurse may ask to examine your prostate, as you can see from the diagram, the gland is very close to the back passage (rectum). A gloved finger is inserted into the back passage the person can check for abnormalities in the prostate. The process is called digital rectal examination (DRE).

Why do I need a prostate biopsy?
Most patients are referred to the urology consultant because it has been found that their Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA), found in a blood test, is raised.

There are several factors, other than cancer, that can account for a rise in this chemical. These include inflammation of the prostate or urinary tract infections (UTIs).

You may be asked to have a biopsy because of other reasons such as a prostate which feels abnormal.
A specialist doctor examines the samples under a microscope and you will be given an appointment to discuss the results with your urology surgeon about two weeks later.

**What do I need to do before the biopsy?**

- Arrange for **somebody else to take you home after the biopsy**, as you will not be able to drive afterwards.
- Arrange for **somebody to be with you for 24 hours** after the biopsy.
- Contact us if you are on anticoagulants (blood thinning medication) for example Warfarin and clopidogrel (Plavix).
- Take the antibiotic ciprofloxacin, **500mg two hours before the time of your arrival in clinic** and continue taking this medication twice a day for three days after to reduce risk of infection. **You must tell us (and not take the tablets) if you are allergic to them** and a substitute will be provided.
- Inform us if you have had a replacement heart valve, as other antibiotics may need to be given.

You do not need to be shaved for the procedure and can eat and drink normally both before and after.

**What happens during the biopsy?**

You will be asked to remove your lower clothing and lie on the couch. The doctor will examine you before the biopsy (see examination of the prostate). An ultrasound probe is used to guide the doctor as he or she takes the samples (biopsies).

It is normal to take between 6 and 12 samples from different parts of the prostate. The whole procedure takes about 15 minutes.

You will hear a clicking sound. When the doctor has finished, you will be given a rectal antibiotic called metronidazole.

**Is the examination painful?**

Putting the probe into the back passage can be uncomfortable, however, most patients find that if they relax the discomfort reduces fairly quickly.

**What do I need to be aware of after the biopsy?**

Most people can go home straight away, although you should get someone to transport you home and you should have somebody stay with you overnight, in case you become unwell.

You may notice blood in your water, sperm or in your faeces after the biopsy. **This is quite normal.** Do not worry as this usually clears during the next couple of weeks. If the bleeding is very heavy or you are unable to pass urine because of blood clots please contact Ward 32 on the telephone number given below.

Serious complications are rare, but if you develop flu like symptoms despite being on antibiotics it could be a sign that you have a severe blood infection. You should contact your GP as you may need to be admitted for intravenous antibiotics. It is important that you take any antibiotics given to you as prescribed.

**Contact details**

Contact your local GP and explain you have had a prostate biopsy.
You can contact Ward 32 at King’s Mill Hospital for advice at any time of the day or night on (01623) 622515, extension 3040.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of the prostate biopsy or contact any member of the team of doctors, nurses or other health care workers looking after you, please ring the urology nurses on (01623) 622515, extension 6284, Monday to Friday, from 8am until 4pm, and Ward 32 (01623) 622515, extension 4140 (for advice only).

**Further sources of information**
NHS Choices: [www.nhs.uk/conditions](www.nhs.uk/conditions)
Our website: [www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk](www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk)

**Patient Experience Team (PET)**
PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

**King’s Mill Hospital:** 01623 672222  
**Newark Hospital:** 01636 685692  
**Email:** sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you.

External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them.

If you require a full list of references for this leaflet, please email sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.