



# Muscle Biopsy

## Outpatient Check-in

Neurological Day Centre, Second floor  
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## ABOUT THE TEST

### What is a muscle biopsy?

It is a minor surgical procedure done with a local anesthetic. A small incision is made and a piece of muscle is removed. The muscle sample is then examined for the purpose of diagnosis.

Muscle biopsies can be done in one of four places. When it is done at the same time as a nerve biopsy, it is done behind the leg (in the midline, just below the knee crease).

### Why is it done?

A muscle biopsy is done to:

- Confirm a specific diagnosis;
- Distinguish between nerve and muscle disorders (between neurogenic and myopathic disorders);
- Identify metabolic defects of the muscle (such as Mitochondrial disease)
- Diagnose diseases of the connective tissue and blood vessels (such as Vasculitis)
- Diagnose inflammation that affects the muscle (such as Dermatomyositis).

### What are the risks or side effects?

The risks and side effects are minor and rare. They include:

- Discomfort and bruising. After the procedure, you may have some minor discomfort and bruising surrounding the biopsy site;
- Infection. There is a slight risk of infection any time an incision is made or skin is broken
- Allergic reaction to the local anaesthetic or to the bandage
- Damage to the muscle tissue or tissues in the area (very rare).

## PREPARATION

### **How do I prepare for this test?**

Any medication that causes prolonged bleeding, such as Entrophen (aspirin), Plavix, Aggrenox, or Coumadin should be stopped beforehand. Your doctor or nurse will tell you when to stop taking these medications. Otherwise there is no special preparation. No fasting is necessary.

### **What happens before the biopsy?**

When you arrive at the Neurological Day Centre, a nurse will ask you some basic questions about your health and also describe the procedure.

If you feel nervous or anxious before the procedure, you may be given a medication to help you relax. This is quite common.

Once you are ready, you will be taken to the operating room where the biopsy is done.

## DURING THE PROCEDURE

### **What happens during the biopsy?**

First, a local anaesthetic is used to numb the biopsy site. Then a small incision is made in the skin and the sample, or biopsy material, is removed.

To help the wound heal, the edges of the incision are held together by a thread (sutures) or by a special tape (steri-strips). The site is then covered with a dressing.

### **How long does it take?**

Normally, it takes 45 minutes.

## AFTER THE PROCEDURE

### **How long does it take for the wound to heal?**

The wound is allowed to heal for a week. During this time, you should not change the dressing. You should keep the dressing dry.

*If you notice any bleeding or oozing from the incision site, or if you get a fever, you should tell your nurse or doctor right away.*

After a week, your bandage (dressing) will be removed. This can be done at your local CLSC or at the Neurology Day Clinic. At the same time that the bandage is removed, the wound will be examined. If there are any sutures in, they will be removed at this time.

### **When and how will I receive the results of my biopsy?**

You will receive the results of your biopsy within 8 weeks. Usually a preliminary report is available within 1 week. If treatment is available for your condition it may be started after the preliminary result is available. A follow-up appointment is made with the doctor who did the test. This appointment takes place in the Neurological Day Centre or in the Doctor's office.