



## Day Case Brain Biopsy

### What is a day case brain biopsy?

A brain biopsy is a procedure, during which a neurosurgeon will remove a small sample of tissue from your brain. This sample is sent to the laboratory and analysed to give an accurate diagnosis. By helping us to identify what the issue is, we can consider potential treatments. Most patients feel the same after the procedure as they did before it, and can go home that day.

You can have the biopsy as a day case (you go home on the same day) as long as you don't have any medical conditions that would mean you need to stay in hospital for a little longer.

### Why do I need a brain biopsy?

An abnormality has been found on a scan of your brain. Your neurosurgeon will have discussed this with you and offered you choices on how to proceed, explaining potential risks and benefits. We have decided to take a brain biopsy so that we can find out what this abnormality is so we can plan potential next steps of treatment or management.

### What are the risks of a brain biopsy?

Brain biopsies are usually a common and safe procedure. However there are always some small but potentially serious risks. These will have been discussed with your neurosurgeon. Possible risks include (please note this is not an exhaustive list):

1. Occasionally minor bleeding and swelling can occur, which usually does not require any further treatment, but may very rarely result in muscle weakness. You may be given steroids to reduce the chance of swelling occurring
2. A small risk of infection, bleed or stroke causing weakness, numbness or paralysis. This may be permanent
3. A small risk of developing seizures that we would treat with medication
4. Not being able to find a diagnosis. If this happens, we may need to repeat the procedure at a later date
5. There is a very small risk to life and we would take standard precautions against clots on the legs, lungs, cardiac problems, and COVID-19

### What's going to happen?

#### Before

You will have an appointment with the neurosurgeons and specialist clinical nurses to discuss the abnormality found on your brain scan. You and your family members or carers will be counselled regarding the condition and what the management options may be. Both verbal and printed information will be provided to help to describe the aims of the biopsy and what the next steps may be. Contact details of how to contact our specialist nurses will be provided. You will need to sign a consent form if you're happy to go ahead with the brain biopsy.

You may have repeat brain scans before the biopsy, so that the surgeons can see where the abnormality is and how to best plan the procedure.

## Information for Patients

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You will also need to attend the pre-operative assessment clinic. At this appointment, a nurse will review your past medical history, medications and your fitness for surgery. You may be given a plan for stopping taking certain medicines before the brain biopsy.

You will be sent a letter stating where and when you will need to come in for your procedure.

### **Patient selection for day case brain biopsy**

To be considered for a day case biopsy, patients must satisfy the following criteria:

- At the time of hospital admission for the biopsy, the patient should not be a hospital in-patient, and living at home with a responsible adult
- The patient should have no significant other conditions or significant illness requiring hospitalisation
- The patient and their family members/carers should be able to understand the potential for complications to arise after discharge, and follow the information relating who to contact and when to re-present to hospital
- On hospital discharge following a day case brain biopsy the patient must be accompanied home by a responsible adult who will be able to accompany them for the next 24 hours
- The patient's domestic circumstances must be appropriate for post-operative discharge and they must have access to a telephone
- It is anticipated that the biopsy will finish by 1300 in order to allow six hours of post-operative observation prior to discharge home

### **During**

When you come into hospital you will have to change into a hospital gown. You will be seen by your surgeon and anaesthetist and various safety checks will be done. You may have a general anaesthetic or sedation to make you feel sleepy.

During the biopsy, the surgeon will shave a small strip of your hair, make a small cut in the skin and make a small 'trap door' in the skull bone so that they can access the brain abnormality. A small sample will be removed and sent to the laboratory for diagnosis. The wound will be closed with stitches or surgical staples.

You will go to a recovery area and then when you are comfortable and fully awake you will return to the ward.

### **After**

Approximately four hours after your brain biopsy, you will have a CT scan to ensure that everything is satisfactory. You can go home six hours after the biopsy is finished as long as all of the following conditions are met:

- Satisfactory post-operative scan
- You have fully woken up and recovered from the anaesthetic
- You have no new symptoms or complications from the procedure
- You have eaten and drunk and passed urine without any issues such as nausea or vomiting
- You will need to leave the hospital, with your accompanying adult by no later than 7pm
- You must be able to remain in the company of a responsible adult for 24 hours after your procedure
- If there are any concerns regarding any of the above aspect we will admit you to the hospital

### Post-operative care

- You will be sent home from hospital with
  - A discharge summary of your hospital care
  - A patient advice leaflet for day case neurosurgical procedures
- The Specialist Brain Tumour Nurses will contact you on the phone the day after surgery to check how you are doing.
- About a week after surgery we will contact you with the diagnosis and a management plan.
- As you have had a brain procedure, you won't be able to drive for a period of time. Once we have the diagnosis, you need to inform the DVLA that you've had this procedure and the result, and the DVLA will let you know when you can drive again.

### What to do if there are any concerns at home

Some mild discomfort is to be expected after surgery. If you experience this, we would recommend taking paracetamol.

If you are concerned or experience any of the following you and/or your carer must contact our team immediately (contact details below). If out of hours and you are concerned, please attend your local Accident & Emergency.

- Headache not controlled with normal painkiller medication
- Nausea or vomiting
- Minor bleeding or discharge from wound, that is not settling

If you or your carer notice any of the following new symptoms, or other symptoms of concern, then please call **999** and ask for an ambulance to be transported to your nearest Accident & Emergency.

- Seizures
- Loss of consciousness
- Difficulty in breathing
- New weakness of arms and legs
- Difficulty with speech
- Visual disturbance

### Contacts and further questions

QEHB Specialist Brain Tumour Nurses, Monday–Friday, 0900–1500

Tel: **+44 121 371 4740**

Email: **BrainTumourSpecialistNurses@uhb.nhs.uk**

**Please use the space below to write down any questions you may have and bring this with you to your next appointment.**

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## Information for Patients

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### Neurosurgery BCU

Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham  
Mindelsohn Way, Edgbaston  
Birmingham, B15 2GW  
Telephone: 0121 627 2000

If you require this information in another format, such as a different language, large print, braille or audio version please ask a member of staff or email [interpreting.service@uhb.nhs.uk](mailto:interpreting.service@uhb.nhs.uk).