

Having a Bone Marrow Test

Cancer Care and
Haematology Unit,
Stoke Mandeville Hospital
and
Sunrise Unit, 5th Floor,
Wycombe Hospital

Patient Information Leaflet

If you require a translation or an alternative format for this leaflet please ask for assistance.

How can I help reduce healthcare associated infections?

Infection prevention & control is important to the well-being of our patients and for that reason we have infection prevention & control procedures in place. Keeping your hands clean is an effective way of preventing the spread of infections. We ask that you, and anyone visiting you, use the hand sanitiser available at the entrance to every ward before coming in to and after leaving the ward. In some situations hands may need to be washed at the sink using soap and water rather than using the hand sanitiser as hand sanitisers are not suitable for use when dealing with patients who have symptoms of diarrhoea.

www.buckshealthcare.nhs.uk

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Safe & compassionate care,

every time

How to contact us

If you wish to speak to a nurse or doctor please telephone:

Day Procedures Room, CCHU Stoke Mandeville Hospital

Tel: 01296 315125

Reception CCHU

Tel: 01396 315516

Monday – Friday 9.00am - 5.00pm

Sunrise Cancer Unit, 5th Floor Wycombe Hospital

Tel: 01494 426238 / 6237

Monday – Friday 9.00am - 5.00pm

If you have a problem outside of these hours please telephone the Haematology ward (Ward 5).

Ward 5 Stoke Mandeville Hospital

Tel: 01296 316336

Research

You may be asked if some of your marrow sample can be used for research. If you agree you will be asked to sign another consent form. Your doctor will be happy to answer any questions about this.

Introduction

You may find this leaflet helpful if you or someone close to you is going to have a bone marrow test.

It explains:

- what bone marrow is
- what a bone marrow test is and why you might need one
- what a bone marrow test involves.

What is bone marrow?

Bone marrow is a sponge like material found inside certain bones of the body. Blood cells are made in the bone marrow. Blood is made up of three main types of cells: red blood cells, white blood cells and platelets. Disorders affecting any of these cell types can be assessed by examining a sample of the bone marrow.

What is a bone marrow test?

In a bone marrow test a sample of bone marrow is taken from inside the bone. This is usually taken from the back of the hip bone, as there is plentiful bone marrow here and it is usually easy to reach. The sample can then be examined under a microscope in a laboratory.

Why do I need a bone marrow test?

The main reason for doing a bone marrow test is to investigate abnormal blood counts. Some of your symptoms or abnormalities on your blood tests suggest that there might be a problem with the way your blood cells are made. A bone marrow test is the best way of investigating this to help the doctors to find a diagnosis.

How is the bone marrow test performed?

The doctor/ nurse will discuss the procedure with you, give you an opportunity to ask questions and ask you to sign a consent form.

A sample is taken from the back of the hip bone. Local anaesthetic is injected into the skin over the back of the hip bone to numb the area where the sample is to be taken.

If you have had a problem with local anaesthetic in the past please form your doctor.

After the procedure a small dressing will be applied over the site. You may shower or bathe and remove the dressing after 24 hours.

Paracetamol may be taken if required after the local anaesthetic has worn off.

Are there any risks?

It is exceedingly rare for a complications to occur.

As with any procedure involving a tissue biopsy, there is a small risk of discomfort, swelling, infection and bleeding can occur from the puncture site

Medication

It is important to tell the nurse or doctor about any tablets or injections you are taking, as they may have to be stopped for a short while before having the test. This is especially important for medications that thin the blood, including warfarin.

How long does it take?

It usually takes about 30 minutes to take the sample. The procedure is a day case.

Entonox (Nitrous oxide and oxygen (gas and air)) is available during the procedure. If Entonox is required you will need someone to drive you home afterwards. FASTING is not required prior to procedure.

Where is it performed?

The test will be performed in the Day Procedures Room in the Cancer Care and Haematology Unit , (CCHU), at Stoke Mandeville Hospital and the Sunrise Unit on the 5th floor at Wycombe Hospital.

When will I get the results?

It will take up to 2 weeks for results to come through to get the bone marrow aspirate result.