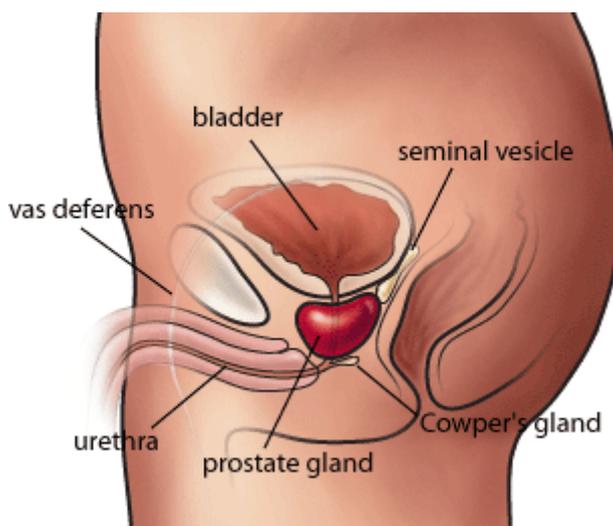


HAVING A PROSTATE BIOPSY

What is the prostate?

The prostate is one of the male sex glands. The prostate adds nutrients and fluid to the sperm. During ejaculation, the prostate secretes fluid that is part of the semen.

The prostate is about the size of a walnut and lies just below the urinary bladder and surrounds the upper part of the urethra. The urethra is the tube that carries urine from the bladder and semen from the sex glands out through the penis.



What is a PSA test?

PSA stands for Prostate Specific Antigen. This is a substance made by the prostate gland and which can be detected by a blood test. Patients with prostate cancer often have a high PSA reading, although you can also have a raised PSA level with non-cancerous conditions.

A PSA test alone may be unreliable for diagnosing prostate cancer, so a biopsy may need to be done to confirm or rule out a cancer

What is a Prostate Biopsy?

This is a test where small samples of tissue are removed from the prostate gland and sent to be tested for the presence of cancer. The test is done in the urology clinic. The test is normally done with you awake, but some local anaesthetic is given to make it more comfortable.

When you have the biopsy, you will lie down on your left side, with your knees bent up. Then, an ultrasound scan of the prostate is performed using a probe inserted into the rectum (back passage). A fine needle is then used to take a number of tissue samples.

When the biopsy is taken, the needle makes a loud click. You may feel the biopsy being taken, but the surgeon will give you some local anaesthetic so that it isn't painful. The procedure can be uncomfortable, and you should let the doctor or nurse know if it is too uncomfortable.

What are the benefits of having a prostate biopsy?

If left alone, prostate cancer can grow and invade surrounding structures e.g. bowel and bladder, or even spread to other parts of the body e.g. lymph glands and bones. By taking a biopsy, a cancer will be detected as soon as possible and the right treatment can be given.

What are the risks and consequences associated with having a prostate biopsy?

Most biopsies are straightforward; however there is a chance of side effects or complications. If you are concerned about any of these risks, or have further queries, please speak with your surgeon directly about them.

Common

- Blood in the urine, motions and semen. This usually settles after 1-2 days
- Discomfort during and immediately after the procedure

Rare

- Bleeding in the urine or motions severe enough to need treatment in hospital.
- Severe infection requiring treatment in hospital and antibiotics through a drip (1%)
- Inability to empty the bladder requiring a catheter (1%)

What sort of anaesthetic will I have?

The biopsy is normally done under local anaesthetic (awake). Occasionally, a general anaesthetic (asleep) is needed and your surgeon will discuss this with you if necessary.

What should I expect after the biopsy?

There may be some discomfort after the biopsy, but this can usually be settled with everyday painkillers such as Paracetamol.

You will be given some antibiotics at the time of the biopsy and some more to take home with you. Always read the instructions that come with the antibiotics carefully.

Metronidazole (Flagyl) is an antibiotic commonly given when you have a prostate biopsy. It is essential that you **do not drink any alcohol for 24 hours** after being given metronidazole as this can have very severe side effects.

It is helpful to drink plenty after the biopsy as this will help to clear any blood in the urine.

If you have excessive bleeding after the biopsy you should call one of the emergency numbers provided to you. Also contact us urgently if you have a high temperature or experience flu-like symptoms.

You will be seen back in the urology clinic to discuss the results of the biopsy. It usually takes about 2 weeks for the results to come back.