EURACARE

PATIENT INFORMATION FORM

LUNG BIOPSY

What is a lung biopsy?
A lung biopsy is a way of taking a small sample of tissue out of your lung, using a special needle. This allows the doctors to look at the sample under a microscope to find out what it is. This will allow an accurate diagnosis and treatment plan for you. As this biopsy is done through the skin, it is called a percutaneous biopsy.

Why do you need a lung biopsy?
Other tests that you have already performed, would have shown that there is an area of abnormal tissue inside your lungs. From the scan, it is not always possible to say exactly what the abnormality is due to, and the simplest way of finding out is by taking a tiny sample and to look at it under a microscope.

Are there any risks?
Percutaneous biopsy is a very safe procedure, but as with any medical procedure there are some risks and complications that can arise. If you are having a lung biopsy performed, it is possible that air can get into the space around the lung (pneumothorax). This generally does not cause any real problems. Despite these possible complications, percutaneous biopsy is normally very safe and is designed to save you from having a bigger procedure.

Who has made the decision?
The consultant in charge of your care and the interventional radiologist performing the procedure have discussed your case and feel that this is the best option. However, you will also have the opportunity for your opinion to be considered and if, after discussion with your doctors, you no longer want the procedure, you can decide against it.

Are you required to make any special preparations?
You will probably have had some blood tests performed beforehand to check that you do not have an increased risk of bleeding. You may be asked not to eat for four hours before the procedure, although you may still drink clear fluids such as water.

Who will you see?
A specially trained doctor called an interventional radiologist. They have special expertise in reading the images and using imaging to guide the needle to the abnormal area.

Where will the procedure take place?
In the radiology department – either in the ultrasound room, CT scanner or a special X-ray room. It all depends on where the abnormal tissue is in the body and which imaging the radiologist feels is best for you.

What happens during the biopsy?
You will be asked to get undressed and put on a hospital gown. You may be given a sedative to relieve anxiety. The radiologist will use an ultrasound probe, X-rays or the CT scanner to decide on the most suitable point for inserting the biopsy needle. Your skin near the point of insertion will be numbed using local anaesthetic, and the biopsy needle inserted into the abnormal tissue.

Will it hurt?
When the local anaesthetic is injected, it will sting for a short while, but this soon wears off. Some discomfort may be felt when the biopsy sample is taken.

How long will it take?
Every patient is different, and it is not always easy to predict; however, expect to be in the radiology department for about 30 minutes.

What happens afterwards?
You will be taken back to a ward. Nursing staff will carry out routine observations including pulse and blood pressure. You will generally stay in bed for a few hours, until you have recovered and are ready to go home.

Finally
Some of your questions should have been answered by this leaflet, but remember that this is only a starting point for discussion about your treatment with the doctors looking after you. Make sure you are satisfied that you have received enough information about the procedure.

Giving my consent (permission)
The staff caring for you will ask your permission to perform the procedure. You will be asked to sign a consent form that says you have agreed to the procedure and that you understand the benefits, risks and alternatives. If there is anything you don't understand or you need more time to think about it, please tell the staff caring for you.