

Having a fibroscan

Issued by the Gastroenterology Department

This information sheet has been given to you to explain what a fibroscan involves and why it is being recommended for you. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to a nurse or doctor caring for you.

What is a fibroscan and why do I need it?

A fibroscan is a type of ultrasound that can measure the degree of inflammation in your liver. It is a simple, painless test that uses high frequency sound waves. Your doctor recommended that you have this test to help us understand the condition of your liver.

What are the benefits of this scan?

Having a fibroscan will help your doctor to understand how much scarring is in your liver. This will help him/her to plan your treatment. A fibroscan is a quick, painless test that gives immediate results. It does not have any potential complications or risks and is non-invasive, which means that it does not break the skin or enter your body.

Are there any alternatives to a fibroscan?

Your doctor or nurse will explain any alternatives available to you in detail. One option is to have a liver biopsy. This is where a small sample of liver tissue is removed with a needle. A liver biopsy has several disadvantages: for example, you need to stay in hospital for several hours after the procedure. It also carries several risks, such as internal bleeding after the biopsy. For further information on this procedure, please ask for the leaflet 'Having a liver biopsy'.

Are there any special precautions?

You cannot have a fibroscan if you are pregnant or have an implantable device, such as a pacemaker or defibrillator. Please speak to your doctor or nurse if you think this applies to you.

What do I need to do to prepare for the scan?

Please do not eat or drink anything for 3 hours before your fibroscan. If you need to, you can take small sips of water or clear fluid, but avoid drinking large amounts of fluid. You should continue taking any prescribed medication.

You will not need to remove any clothing for the scan, but we will need to expose the right side of your abdomen (tummy). Therefore, we do not recommend that women wear a dress on the day of their test. You will not need to remove any jewellery near the site of the scan, such as a belly button piercing.

What happens before the fibroscan?

You will need to book in with the receptionist and then take a seat in the waiting area. A nurse will call you into one of the consulting rooms, where you will be able to ask any questions you have about the fibroscan.

Once you have discussed the scan, providing you are happy to go ahead, you will have the test.

What happens during the scan?

You will be asked to lie on an examination couch and place your right arm above your head. The nurse will feel your abdomen to find the right place to perform the scan. He/she will place a probe on your abdomen and trigger the probe to start. The sound waves will be sent out from the probe in pulses. They will pass through your skin to your liver and bounce back. This will feel like a gentle flick against the side of your skin – it should not hurt.

The scanner measures the time it takes for the sound wave to bounce back. We will repeat this at least 10 times to make sure we get an accurate result. The mean (average) reading is then calculated by the scanner, which will show your doctor your liver stiffness.

The scan should take between 10 and 20 minutes to perform.

What happens after the scan?

As soon as the fibroscan is finished you will be able to either go home or return to work.

When will I get the result?

The result will be sent to the doctor who referred you for the fibroscan and he/she will discuss it with you at your next outpatient appointment.

Your scan will be carried out at North Tyneside General Hospital.

If you need further information please contact us on 0191 293 4151.

Alternative Formats

If you would like a copy of this information in large print, another language, audio tape or other format please call the Contact Centre on 0344 811 8118.

Other sources of information

NHS 111

NHS Choices www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx

NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence) www.nice.org.uk

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Freephone: 0800 032 0202

Text: 01670 511098 Email: northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

General Enquiries 0344 811 8111 www.northumbria.nhs.uk

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