

PRE-PROCEDURE GUIDE: PROSTATE BIOPSY

I. UNDERSTANDING PROSTATE BIOPSIES

Your prostate gland is located at the base of your urinary bladder. It is normally the size of a walnut and surrounds the tube (urethra) through which urine passes from your bladder to the outside of your body. The prostate produces the liquid that mixes with sperm to make semen.

I can examine your prostate in two ways. First, I can actually feel its rear surface during a rectal exam because it sits just in front of your rectum. Second, I can take a sample of your blood and send it to a lab where the amount of prostate-specific antigen (PSA) can be measured. Abnormalities found with these exams may indicate prostate cancer, noncancerous (benign) tumors, infection, or even the normal effects of getting older. A biopsy is sometimes needed to determine the exact problem.

A biopsy enables me to obtain small bits of tissue from your prostate. The tissue will be sent to a pathology laboratory, to be examined carefully under a microscope by a specialist physician (pathologist). The pathologist will send us a report that will tell us whether an abnormality is present, whether it is benign or cancerous (malignant), and, to some extent, how dangerous the problem appears to be. This information is essential in order for us to know if you need further treatment and, if so, what kind of treatment is likely to be most successful. We will discuss your unique clinical circumstances before the biopsy procedure to decide if a different approach should be considered.

You will need to be off any blood thinners (Coumadin, aspirin, NSAID's) prior to the biopsy. Please tell me if you are taking any of these medications.

II. PROCEDURE

A prostate biopsy can be done safely in my office or in an outpatient surgery facility. An overnight hospital stay is not necessary. You will remain awake during the procedure.

We will give you an antibiotic pill prior to the procedure. I will insert an ultrasound probe into your rectum. It is about the size of my finger. It will allow me to image the prostate, measure its dimensions and volume, and visualize any abnormal areas. I will place a small needle through the probe through which I will remove small cores of tissue from different parts of the prostate to create a "map of the gland". It is unusual to have significant pain during the procedure. Most men feel a sensation like a rubber band snapping. I'll warn you before each biopsy so as not to startle you. The tissue samples will then be sent to a laboratory for diagnosis.

III. AFTER YOUR PROSTATE BIOPSY

There are rarely any severe after effects from a prostate biopsy. You may feel mild discomfort at the site of the biopsy. It shouldn't last long and can be treated with your usual pain medication. Some men notice blood in their urine, semen, or stools after a prostate biopsy, although serious bleeding is rare. You should contact me if you develop an elevated temperature, severe pain, severe bleeding or the passage of blood clots, or other unexpected symptoms. There is usually no need to change your normal activities, but we will discuss this at the time of your biopsy.

IV. COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **Is it all right to have a bowel movement following my prostate biopsy?** Yes. Having a bowel movement is not dangerous and should not be painful.
- **Will the prostate biopsy affect me sexually?** No. There will be no after affects of the biopsy that will change your sexual ability or enjoyment. Your semen may contain some blood for a while, but this is not harmful to you or to your partner.
- **How can I have a prostate problem if I have no symptoms?** Prostate problems often do not cause symptoms in their early stages. Treatment is far more likely to be successful during this "silent" stage, so it is important to make the diagnosis now.
- **When will the results of my biopsy be available?** The pathologists will report their findings to my office within four to five days.