



Manchester University
NHS Foundation Trust

Royal Manchester Children's Hospital

Paediatric Otorhinolaryngology (ENT)

Lymph node biopsy

Information for Parents, Carers and Patients

Consultant:

Tel:





What is a lymph node?

Lymph nodes are a part of your immune system. They act as filters for harmful substances and contain immune cells that can help fight infection. There are hundreds of lymph nodes throughout the body including in the neck, armpits, abdomen and groin.

Palpable cervical lymph nodes (lymph nodes in the neck which you can feel) are a common finding in children. They are present in about 50% of children between 6-12 months old and 40% of children between 2-5 years old. The majority of these are nothing to be concerned about. If you have been advised that your child needs a lymph node biopsy, your Consultant will have advised you why this is required for your child's particular circumstances.

Why does my child need to have a lymph node biopsy?

In general, a lymph node biopsy is done if:

- there are enlarged lymph node(s) which do not return to a normal size on their own
- unexplained symptoms such as ongoing fever, night sweats, or weight loss
- there are atypical features found on ultrasound

Are there any alternatives?

While in adults there are sometimes other means of assessing lymph nodes including a fine needle aspirate (FNA) or core biopsy, the kind of diseases which cause lymph node enlargement in children need a lymph node biopsy to make an accurate diagnosis. Your child will be reviewed in the outpatient clinic or on the ward depending on their circumstances. If a lymph node biopsy is felt to be required, your doctor will explain this to you. They will go through the risks and potential complications of the



procedure and answer any questions you may have. A written consent form will then be provided to you to sign at that time.

What are the effects of removing a lymph node?

The body has hundreds of lymph nodes and removing one will have no adverse effect on your child's immune system.

What are the benefits of a lymph node biopsy?

A lymph node biopsy allows for close and in-depth examination of the lymph node to help make a diagnosis. This can then be used to either direct further tests (if required) or decide what treatment (if any) is best suited for your child.

What are the risks of a lymph node biopsy?

As with all surgery, a lymph node biopsy is associated with some risks. These include:

- Infection – this is easily treated with antibiotics
- Bleeding – a small amount of blood-stained discharge from the wound is not uncommon after surgery
- A small collection of fluid (seroma) may build up in the space previously occupied by the lymph node. This fluid may need to be removed using a needle and syringe. Very rarely, this may need to be done more than once
- There is a small risk of damage to the nerves. One of these nerves is the accessory nerve. If this nerve is damaged, it can lead to varying degrees of shoulder dysfunction. Another nerve which may be affected is the marginal mandibular nerve. This is the nerve which moves the corner of your mouth. If this nerve is damaged, it could lead to an asymmetric smile/grimace. Both of these injuries are extremely rare
- It is possible that the laboratory testing from the lymph node may be inconclusive and a further biopsy may be required



- There is a very small risk with any anaesthetic. However, modern anaesthetics are very safe

What will happen on the day of the procedure?

Information about how to prepare your child for their operation will be included in their admission letter. It is important to follow these instructions. Failure to do so may result in the procedure being delayed or cancelled.

Your surgeon will speak to you again on the day of surgery to once again go through the procedure, risks and complications with you and to answer any questions you may have following your clinic/ward review. As the lymph node biopsy is performed under a general anaesthetic, your child will also be reviewed by an anaesthetist on the day of surgery. They will be able to answer any questions you may have relating to the general anaesthetic.

Once your child is in theatre and the general anaesthetic has been given, an incision (cut) will be made over the enlarged lymph node. Your surgeon will always try and place the incision in a naturally-occurring skin crease for the best cosmetic outcome after the surgery. The node is then dissected out (freed) from its surroundings with care. Depending on the findings at surgery, your surgeon may remove all of the enlarged lymph node (excision biopsy) or part of it (incision biopsy). The lymph node is then sent to the lab for testing. The wound is carefully closed in layers using absorbable stitches. Some paper stitches may be applied on to the skin. Your child will also be given some local anaesthetic around the wound to help control post-operative pain. While it is not normally required, your child may need a drain (small plastic tube) to be left in place for 24-48 hours afterwards. This can then be easily removed on the ward

How long will the procedure take?

The procedure itself usually takes around 30-40 minutes. However, it





may take a little longer. Afterwards, your child will go to the recovery room.



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What will my child be like afterwards?

Your child will recover from the anaesthetic in the recovery room and then be taken to the ward. It is not uncommon for children to be a little tired and disorientated after a general anaesthetic. Occasionally they may complain of a sore throat. The doctors may prescribe some Paracetamol if this is the case.

Your child can drink as soon as they are awake. Nursing staff will advise you when your child may eat.

Your surgeon will speak to you again following the procedure. In most cases, your child can go home the same day. Some children have to stay overnight to be monitored if they required a drain or if there are any other medical problems requiring an overnight stay. Follow up will be arranged by the ENT team and you will be sent a letter with an appointment for your child.

When can my child go back to school?

Your child can go back to school/nursery once you feel they are back to normal.

Is there anything I need to watch for when my child goes home?

If you notice any of the following symptoms, please contact the ward from which your child was discharged for further advice:

- Redness, swelling, bleeding or pus coming from the wound
- Your child has a fever





Covid and surgery

It is likely that having an operation while carrying the Covid-19 virus causes an additional risk of developing complications. How much of a risk this is in children remains unclear. Whilst we are awaiting more details around this, we have taken precautions both prior to admission as well as during hospital stay to limit the risk of Covid-19 in the peri-operative period.

Questions

We understand that there may be questions that either you or your child would like answering. Most of us forget what we were going to ask the doctor or the nurse.

Please write your questions below.



No Smoking Policy

Please protect our patients, visitors and staff by adhering to our no smoking policy. Smoking is not permitted in any of our hospital buildings or grounds, except in the dedicated smoking shelters in the grounds of our Hospital site.

For advice and support on how to give up smoking, go to www.nhs.uk/smokefree.





Translation and Interpretation Service

It is our policy that family, relatives or friends cannot interpret for patients. Should you require an interpreter ask a member of staff to arrange it for you.

تتص سیاستا علی عدم السماح لافراد عائلة المرضى او اقاربهم او اصدقائهم بالترجمة لهم. اذا احتجت الى مترجم فيرجى ان تطلب ذلك من احد العاملين ليرتب لك ذلك.

بماری یہ پالیسی ہے کہ خاندان ، رشتہ دار اور دوست مریضوں کے لئے ترجمہ نہیں کر سکتے۔ اگر آپ کو مترجم کی ضرورت ہے تو عملے کے کسی رکن سے کہیں کہ وہ آپ کے لئے اس کا بندوبست کر دے۔

ইহা আমাদের নীতি যে, একজন রোগীর জন্য তার পরিবারের সদস্য, আত্মীয় বা কোন বন্ধু অনুবাদক হতে পারবেন না। আপনার একজন অনুবাদকের প্রয়োজন হলে তা একজন কর্মচারীকে জানান অনুবাদকের ব্যবস্থা করার জন্য।

Nasze zasady nie pozwalają na korzystanie z pomocy członków rodzin pacjentów, ich przyjaciół lub ich krewnych jako tłumaczy. Jeśli potrzebują Państwo tłumacza, prosimy o kontakt z członkiem personelu, który zorganizuje go dla Państwa.

Waa nidaamkeena in qoys, qaraaboamasaaxii boaysanu tarjumikarinbukaanka. Haddii aad u baahatotarjumaankacodsoxubinka mid ah shaqaalahainaykuusameeyaan.

我们的方针是，家属，亲戚和朋友不能为病人做口译。如果您需要口译员，请叫员工给您安排。



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