

Temporal Artery Biopsy

Head and Neck Outpatients

The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available
- If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111
- Keep the environment clean and tidy
- Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.

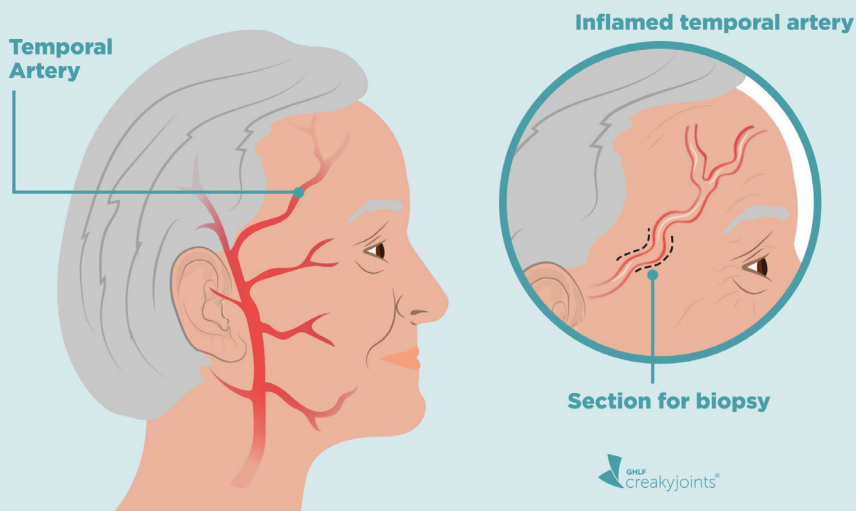
Introduction

This information leaflet will provide you, the patient with the instructions for having a Temporal Artery Biopsy Procedure in the Outpatient Department.

Description

A temporal artery biopsy is a minor surgical procedure to remove a small section of the temporal artery (located at the side of the forehead). This procedure helps diagnose Giant Cell Arteritis (GCA), an inflammation of the blood vessels that can affect vision and cause headaches. GCA, also known as temporal arteritis, is a type of vasculitis. It usually affects people 50 or older. If left untreated, it can cause complications like double vision, blindness, stroke, and rarely aneurysms (swelling over the arteries that can rupture or leak). If you are experiencing symptoms such as headaches, jaw pain, or vision problems, your doctor may suspect GCA. The biopsy confirms the diagnosis and determines whether steroid treatment is needed, as patients who are confirmed to have GCA will require long-term steroid medication.

Temporal Artery Biopsy for Giant Cell Arteritis



Consent

We must seek your consent for any procedure or treatment beforehand. Your doctor will explain the risks, benefits, and alternatives where relevant before they ask for your consent. If you are unsure about any aspect of the procedure or treatment proposed, please do not hesitate to ask for more information.

Benefits

The benefits are to diagnose or rule out the condition of Giant Cell Arteritis as this procedure is the best test for this.

Risks

Although temporal artery biopsy is generally safe, there are some risks:

- **Scarring** of the skin
- **Bleeding:** Minor bleeding or bruising is expected
- **Infection:** There is a small risk of infection at the incision site
- **Nerve Injury:** Rarely, temporary numbness around the incision may occur
- **Forehead muscle weakness:** usually temporary but very rarely permanent

Alternatives

Sometimes a doctor can use a special scan to look at your arteries instead. You do not have this procedure, but it will make it more difficult to find the cause of your symptoms, if you do not have this procedure.

Before the procedure or treatment

Pre-Assessment:

- You will have a consultation where your doctor will explain the procedure and obtain your consent
- You may have undergone other investigations, including blood tests and temporal artery ultrasound. In some cases, doctors may continue to treat you for GCA even if the biopsy is negative or inconclusive if there is strong clinical suspicion
- The procedure is diagnostic and not a treatment for GCA

Medications:

- Continue taking your regular medications unless your healthcare team advises otherwise
- Inform your doctor if you are on blood-thinning medications (For example, aspirin, warfarin, or clopidogrel), as these may need to be adjusted

Fasting:

- Fasting is usually not required, and you can eat and drink normally unless advised differently
- It will be done as a day-case procedure

On the day of the procedure

- **Hair shaving:** Might be required if the vessels run below your hairline. The hair will usually grow back and hide the scar
- **Local Anaesthetic:** A local anaesthetic will numb the area around your temple, so you should not feel any pain
- **Incision:** A small cut (about 2-3 cm) will be made in the skin over the artery
- **Biopsy:** A small section of the artery will be removed for examination
- **Closure:** The incision will be closed with stitches, which may be dissolvable or need removal after a week
- The entire procedure usually takes around **30-45 minutes**

After the procedure

Wound Care:

- Keep the area dry and avoid touching the wound for two weeks
- You may have a dressing over the incision for a few days

Stitches Removal:

- If non-dissolvable stitches are used, you must have them removed after about seven to 10 days
- No stitch removal for dissolvable stitches

Pain Management:

- After the anaesthetic wears off, you may experience some discomfort. Over-the-counter pain relief, like paracetamol, can help
- Avoid aspirin or ibuprofen unless advised by your doctor, as these can increase bleeding risk.

Activity:

- You can resume normal activities the day after the procedure but avoid strenuous exercise for a few days.

Discharged home

The biopsy results will typically be available in one to two weeks. Your doctor will discuss the findings and the next steps in your care. In the meantime, if you have been started on steroids, you must continue this. The steroid prescription will be provided by the Rheumatology Team, and they will follow up the appointment with the results and a plan will be made after the biopsy by them.

Contacts and useful numbers and links

If you have any concerns or questions, contact the clinic at 01902 307999 - extension 85046 (A25 Head and Neck Clinic) or your GP.

In an emergency, seek immediate medical attention at your nearest Accident and Emergency (A&E) department.

Takayasu's and Giant Cell Arteritis Rheumatology | Lecturio.
<https://www.lecturio.com/medical-courses/large-vessel-vasculitides-takayasus-giant-cell-arteritis.lecture>

English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。