Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Bone Marrow Examination

Version number: **7**
Last modified date: **12th November 2026**

Bone Marrow Examination

Patient Information

Haematology Service

The Patient Information Leaflets page on the Trust website is available on the link: https://www.wwl.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets or scan the QR code.

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Introduction

This procedure is performed in the Out-patients Department by trained nurses and usually takes about 30 minutes. There are no special preparations needed before the test (e.g. no need to fast from food or drink) Any anticoagulant medication (medicine to prevent blood clots) should be omitted before the procedure. The timing will be decided by your consultant when they book you for the procedure.

You will be asked to lie on your left side with your knees bent up to your chest, as far as you are able. There is no need to undress, just loosen clothing below the waist (tight girdles will have to be removed). The area at the back of the hip is swabbed with a cleaning solution and then a local anaesthetic is injected, to numb the site.

When the Bone Marrow needle is introduced, you may feel some slight pushing and pressure, then a sharp pulling sensation for a second as a few drops of bone marrow are withdrawn. A dressing is placed over the area, and you will be asked to lie on your back for approximately 15 minutes.

Occasionally a biopsy of the bone marrow is needed. This test is a repeat of the above and takes a little longer. Following either test you do not need to follow any special instructions.

When the anaesthetic ‘wears off’ you may experience some discomfort (like toothache). A mild painkiller such as paracetamol can be taken if desired.

Complications of the procedure are rare (less than 1 in 100) these include some bruising or bleeding around the needle site but that will subside over the next few days.

If you have any queries, please feel free to contact:

The Haematology Nurse Specialist, Tel 01942 822964 (answer machine)

Monday to Friday, 9am until 5pm.



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