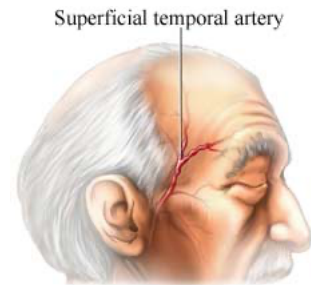


What is a Temporal Artery Biopsy?

A temporal artery biopsy is a small procedure where part of the superficial temporal artery is removed for examination under a microscope. This is done by a small cut on the side of the forehead in front of the ear. The operation is done to establish a diagnosis of temporal arteritis or giant cell arteritis. It does not cure the condition.



Will I feel any pain?

The procedure is generally done under general anaesthesia (GA), but it can be done under local anaesthesia (LA). When done under GA, you will be completely asleep and will not feel anything during the operation. When done under LA, you will be sedated, and painkillers will be given. You may feel some pushing and pulling, and any pain can be controlled with further painkillers or more local anaesthetic which numbs the area.

After the operation you should only need simple pain medication such as Panadol or Nurofen.

How much will be removed? Will there be a large scar?

The more tissue is removed the more accurate the diagnosis will be. A balance must be made between leaving a large scar and removing enough to achieve a diagnosis. In most cases, a 2cm incision on each side of the head is enough. The scar will usually be hidden behind the hairline.

Are there any risks?

Every operation carries some small amount of risk. In most cases the wound will heal with no problems. Infection or wound problems are rare. A small area of numbness will be expected around the scar and may involve the front of the temple or the top of the ear. Very rarely, nerve injury can occur which can affect movement of the face and eyebrow.

What do I do before the procedure?

Usually, you will be asked to come to the hospital on the day of the operation. Please fast for 6 hours (nothing to eat or drink) prior to the operation. You can have your usual medication with a small sip of water on the day of surgery. Please advise our staff if you are diabetic or on blood thinners.

What happens after the procedure?

The sutures are dissolving and do not need to be removed. There will be a hard glue dressing over the skin which will peel off over 1-2 weeks.

You can get dressed and eat and drink normally, and most patients will go home later the same day. We advise that you do not wash your hair for 24 hours after the operation.

If you have any bleeding, spreading redness, or severe pain then please contact the hospital or our offices for advice.

An appointment will be made with your rheumatologist or other specialist to check the results of the biopsy about 1 week after the procedure.