Your doctor has requested that you have a bone marrow biopsy test.

The biopsy test involves taking fluid from the bone marrow by a needle inserted into the bone. At the same time, a small amount of bone is removed so it can be analysed too. These samples are then examined by specialist Haematology pathologists. Results are usually available to your doctor in three working days, although some special tests can take several weeks.

Bone marrow tests are performed from Monday to Thursday mornings in the Haematology Oncology Centre on the 1st floor of the William Buckland Building (South Block).

**Before the test**

You must not eat or drink anything after midnight before the day of your bone marrow biopsy test. You may take your usual medications with a small sip of water (less than 100mL). If you have diabetes please contact the Laboratory Haematology Registrar on (03) 9076 3075 for special instructions. You will be provided with something to eat and drink after the test.

If you have any of the following medical problems, please inform both your doctor AND the Laboratory Haematology Registrar on (03) 9076 3075.

- Diabetes
- Taking warfarin or other blood thinning medications
- Any heart disease
- Any lung disease
- Drug allergy/prior allergic reactions
- Taking HIV medication
- Have been told you need extra sedation for bone marrow biopsies in the past

If you have any of the problems listed above, you may need special anaesthetic support, so you should notify both your doctor and the Laboratory Haematology Registrar on (03) 9076 3075.

If you are an outpatient, you must arrive half an hour before your scheduled bone marrow test to the Haematology/Oncology Centre. The appointment time given to you is only approximate; be prepared for the visit to take several hours. You should bring someone with you to take you home or arrange to be picked up after the test.

**About the test**

Before the bone marrow biopsy test, the procedure will be explained to you and any questions you have will be answered. You will then need to sign a consent form to proceed. Before the test begins, the nurse will insert a small needle into your arm to take a blood sample. You may be given some short-acting sedative...
medication to minimise any discomfort during the test. The sedative medication is not a general anaesthetic and is recommended but not necessary. The most common site for the samples to be taken is from the back of the right hip (not the spine) so you will be asked to lie on your left side with your knees drawn to your chest. Your skin will be washed with antiseptic and you will be given a local anaesthetic. During the bone marrow biopsy test, you may feel some minor discomfort.

**After the test**

After your bone marrow test, a small bandage will be placed on the biopsy area. You will be taken to a recovery area and monitored up to an hour. Keep the bandage on and dry for 24 hours. Do not take a shower or bath, and don't swim or use a hot tub. After 24 hours, it's OK to get the biopsy area wet. Although you can often return to your normal activities after a bone marrow test, avoid rigorous activity or exercise for a day or two. This will help minimise bleeding and discomfort.

**Precautions** The medication used for sedation takes some time to wear off completely, and can lead to short-term impaired judgment, memory lapses or slowed response time. You are advised to follow the guidelines listed below for the first 24 hours following the test:

- Take only medication prescribed by your doctor
- Do not drink alcohol
- Do not drive a car
- Do not take public transport without an escort
- Do not take control of machinery or hazardous appliances
- Avoid tasks which involve concentration or responsible decision making

**Side effects of the test**

A Bone marrow biopsy test is a very safe procedure with only a small risk of side effects. The most common side effects are bleeding and mild to moderate pain at the site. More serious side effects are very rare. If you wish to know more about these please ask the doctor doing the test before they begin. If you experience pain at the site of the biopsy test it should be able to be controlled by taking paracetamol. It is recommended that you do not take aspirin or aspirin-containing medications immediately after the procedure as they may cause bleeding. Please contact the Laboratory Haematology Registrar on the numbers below or after hours the Clinical Haematology Registrar on call on 9076 2000 if any of the following occurs:

- Bleeding that soaks through the bandage or doesn't stop with direct pressure
- Worsening pain or discomfort not controlled with paracetamol
- Fever
- Swelling or redness at the biopsy site
- Any other concerns regarding the test or your care afterwards

---

If you have any queries regarding this information, contact the Haematology/Oncology Clinic:

**Phone:** (03) 9076 3169 or the Laboratory Haematology Registrar: (03) 9076 3075 or (03) 9076 3888

---

Alfred Health
Visitor Parking at The Alfred

The visitors’ car park is situated underground at The Alfred Centre (off Centre Lane), enter from Commercial Road. Operating hours are 6:00am – 10:30pm, 7 days per week.

Disabled Parking at The Alfred

Disabled parking is located at the main entrance to the hospital and at various points around the hospital. Disabled parking in the visitors car park will be charged at normal rates unless you hold a pension or healthcare card. (Refer to map for disabled parking options).

Concession Rates at The Alfred

Any holder of a pension or healthcare card will be charged car parking concessions fees on a sliding scale. To receive the concession rate your pension or healthcare card must be produced upon entry to the car park.

To find out more about car parking arrangements at The Alfred visit The Alfred website at www.alfred.org.au or call (03) 9076 2266