

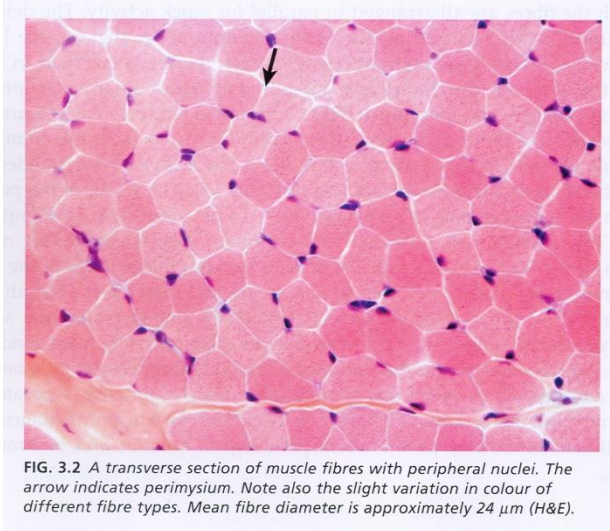


Muscle biopsy

When we recommend your child to have a muscle biopsy to help make a diagnosis of the underlying condition, you must have a lot of questions. We hope the following explanation will be helpful to you.

What is a muscle biopsy?

In a muscle biopsy, a small sample of muscle will be removed for examination. This is usually taken from the quadriceps muscle (upper outer thigh muscles) but other muscles including the biceps, triceps and the calf muscle may be selected sometimes depending on your doctor's final decision.



How can a muscle biopsy help?

A muscle biopsy is helpful in diagnosing conditions associated with muscle weakness. By looking at the muscle tissues under the microscope and doing additional laboratory tests, it allows the doctor to know more and even determine the cause of the muscle weakness. Sometimes, a muscle biopsy is useful for investigating some rare conditions that do not directly cause muscle weakness.

What are the risks of a muscle biopsy?

As only a small amount of muscle biopsy is needed, the risk is small. The risks include some pain at the site of the biopsy after the local anaesthetic wears off. This will usually stop by taking paracetamol or will naturally stop in a few days. A small amount of bleeding immediately after the biopsy may happen and will stop when pressure is applied to the site. Risk of infection around the wound may occur but the risk is minimal as the procedure takes place in theatre under aseptic technique.

What happens during the muscle biopsy?

The doctor performing the biopsy will not usually be the doctor looking after you, however, will be a trained surgeon. The procedure is performed in an operating theatre which is regularly thoroughly sterilized. The procedure is carried out while your child is under a general anaesthetic so he or she will not feel any pain during the procedure. There will be some local pain relief injected at the site of the biopsy during the procedure, which will then last for one to two hours afterwards.

What will happen after the muscle biopsy?

After the surgery, the biopsy site will be covered with a sterile dressing and a bandage. The dressing should remain in place for three to five days and you must keep the wound and dressing dry. Generally, the stitches dissolve and do not need to be removed, but sometimes a stronger type of stitch is used, which will need to be removed. You will be told of which type of stitch your child has. Immediately after the muscle biopsy, you should rest your child's leg for three hours with their legs raised on a pillow to prevent swelling and complications, as well as to aid healing. He or she can go home on the same day. It is important to maintain mobility but try to avoid a lot of exercise or too much walking for first week.

How long does it take to get the results?

As a lot of tests will be carefully performed on the muscle biopsy, the result will usually be available after 4 - 6 weeks.