



## **Patient Information for Liver Biopsy**

### **General Information**

In order to help you get the correct diagnosis, your doctor has asked us to perform a test called a liver biopsy. This test involves obtaining a small piece of liver tissue to send to the laboratory to be examined under the microscope to determine the cause of your liver problem.

This sheet will test you what is involved in the procedure. If you have any questions, please ask the doctor who is to perform the test. He/she will be happy to discuss this in as much detail as you wish.

### **What is involved?**

After determining the correct site to perform the biopsy, the doctor will place local anaesthetic into the skin and down onto the surface of the liver. Local anaesthetic causes a brief stinging discomfort. Following this a specially designed needle will be used to take the biopsy itself which only takes a few seconds.

You may be asked to remain resting in a bed for a period of 1 to 2 hours following the procedure. This bed rest is within Mercy Hospital and is in a Day Stay Ward. There is an additional charge for this outlined above. Observations, including blood pressure and pulse rate, will be made frequently to determine if any complications are occurring.

It is suggested that you avoid strenuous physical exercise for 48 hours following the procedure.

### **Risks of procedure**

Some complications do occur but the benefits are considered to outweigh these risks.

The most common complication is some discomfort at the time of liver biopsy or soon afterwards. Treatment for this is usually pain medication either orally or by injection. Discomfort of this nature may be expected in about one third of patients.

Significant bleeding may occur (in 1 – 2% of patients) and may cause abdominal pain and low blood pressure. Admission to hospital, a blood transfusion and occasionally treatment to stop the bleeding may be required. Other rare complications requiring operations may also occur but are extremely rare.