

Collection of Tissue Specimens

BIOPSIES, e.g. from liver.

1. Biopsy
 - transfer from the needle without delay. Try and avoid contamination
 - at least ONE CENTIMETRE length is needed (or results may be invalid because of liver non-homogeneity).
 - if the specimen is to be divided (e.g. for Histology), please use a new scalpel.
2. Container*
 - place the biopsy on clean filter paper moistened with deionised water
 - place the filter paper + biopsy in a suitable container. A Sterilin 'Universal' is acceptable
3. Storage; the sample should be kept in the fridge or frozen (-20°C), unless it is to be sent immediately. It may be advisable to inform the clinical biochemistry laboratory beforehand, so that they know when to expect the biopsy.
4. Request; a request form or letter is acceptable, provided an address and telephone/bleep number(s) of the dispatching laboratory is given. The nature of the request (copper, iron etc.), with brief clinical details regarding the patient, needs to be given. Other biochemical information e.g. serum copper/caeruloplasmin and urine copper, if known, would be helpful for interpretation.
5. Transport; the sample must be securely sealed and in a plastic bag, and dispatched in a protected strong container or SAS box. The sample can be sent via courier or first class post.

Please note: This procedure should be avoided on Hep B or Hep C positive patients. Please discuss beforehand if in any doubt.

* Check with the laboratory. The moist environment is suggested as the biopsy may dry out if exposed to room/warm temperatures for too long. Occasionally, due to static charge, the dry sample migrates towards top of universal or gets stuck to lid. There is thus a potential risk of sample being lost, especially if sample was small, as lid of container is opened. However, some laboratories prefer a dry sample in which case use unmoistened filter paper.

NON-BIOPSIES, e.g. from surgery or post mortem

Place the sample directly into a plain plastic container. Do not put into formalin or other fixative. Follow instructions above for storing and sending to the laboratory.

The laboratory may agree to analyse a formalin-fixed or embedded sample but will make comments relating to possible contamination or losses associated with the processing. Please contact the laboratory before sending a sample.