

What is a kidney biopsy?

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A kidney biopsy is a procedure that involves taking one or more tiny pieces of kidney tissue for examination under a regular microscope AND a highly-specialized electron microscope. A pathologist (a doctor who specializes in diagnosing diseases) examines the kidney tissue sample in a renal pathology lab to look for signs of kidney disease or infection

Why is a kidney biopsy needed?

Some kidney problems can often be found by blood and urine tests, a sonogram (an image made by ultrasound) or other specialized x-rays, and a physical examination rather than a biopsy. But in some patients with certain types of kidney disease, and those with a kidney transplant that is not working properly, a correct diagnosis can only be made with a kidney biopsy. The kidney tissue sample can show inflammation, scarring, infection, or unusual deposits of a protein called immunoglobulin.

Specific reasons to do a kidney biopsy include

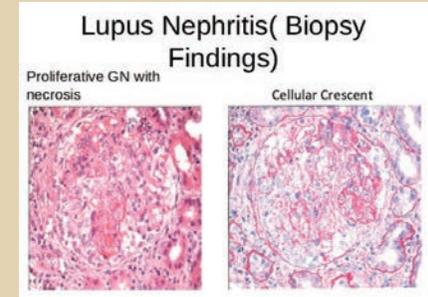
- Blood in the urine (hematuria) or protein in the urine (proteinuria)
- Acute or chronic kidney disease with no clear cause. If a person has chronic kidney disease – any condition that causes reduced kidney function over a period of time – the biopsy may show how quickly the disease is advancing.
- Nephrotic Syndrome (which happens when the filtering units of the kidneys are damaged)
- A particular disease to see if it gets better with treatment or if it is getting worse. It may also show a problem that cannot be cured, but can be slowed down by other therapy.
- If the kidney has been transplanted and is not working, a kidney biopsy may be helpful to identify the cause.
- A kidney tumor.

How is the kidney biopsy done?

A kidney biopsy is done in a hospital. An overnight stay may be needed to watch for any complications. You may be awake with only light sedation. You will be lying face down with a pillow under your rib cage. If the biopsy is done on a transplanted kidney, you will be lying on your back. The kidney tissue is taken using a needle placed through the skin over the kidney and guided to the right place in the kidney, usually with the help of ultrasound. The entire procedure, from start to finish, usually lasts about one hour. Sometimes the biopsy may take longer than an hour.

Test results

After the tissue sample is taken, work to study the biopsy is really just beginning. There are specially trained pathologists and laboratories with specialized equipment for reading and interpreting kidney biopsies. It often takes three to five days to get the full biopsy results. In some cases, you may have a partial or full report within 24 hours or less.



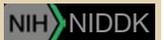
Things to Remember

More than 26 million Americans have chronic kidney disease, and most don't even know it. Millions more are at increased risk. The National Kidney Foundation, a major voluntary health organization, seeks to prevent kidney and urinary tract diseases, improve the health and well-being of individuals and families affected by these diseases, and increase the availability of all organs for transplantation. Through its affiliates and divisions nationwide, the foundation conducts programs in research, professional education, patient and community services, public education and organ donation.

All of the physicians at Shoals Kidney and Hypertension Center were trained during their nephrology fellowship programs and have years of experience in performing kidney biopsies at Helen Keller Hospital and Eliza Coffee Memorial Hospital.

Sources:

Arkana Laboratories: <https://www.arkanalabs.com/>
National Institute of Health: <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diagnostic-tests/kidney-biopsy>



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