

# Having a fibroscan

Department of Hepatology

Digestive Diseases Centre

## Who is this leaflet for?

This leaflet is for people who will be having a fibroscan. The information within this leaflet will explain what to expect when you have the scan.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to one of the nurses or doctors caring for you.

## What is a fibroscan and what does it measure?

A fibroscan is a type of scan that can measure the 'stiffness' of your liver, which in turn reflects the degree of scarring in your liver (fibrosis).

It is a simple, painless test which gives immediate results. It does not have any potential complications or risks and is non-invasive, which means that it does not break the skin or enter your body. Having a fibroscan will help your doctor/nurse understand the condition of your liver and if there is any scarring (fibrosis) present. This will help them to plan your care and treatment.

## Are there any alternatives to a fibroscan?

Your doctor or nurse will explain any alternatives available to you in detail.

One option is to have a liver biopsy. This is where a small sample of liver tissue is removed with a needle. A liver biopsy has several disadvantages: for example, you need to stay in hospital for several hours after the procedure. It also carries several small risks, such as internal bleeding after the biopsy.

In approximately 10% of patients it can be difficult to obtain accurate results from a Fibroscan. Sometimes a liver biopsy may still be recommended despite a Fibroscan being performed. If a biopsy is needed then your doctor will discuss this with you at your next appointment.

## Are there any special precautions?

You cannot have a fibroscan if you have ascites (a build-up of fluid that causes your abdomen to swell), Please speak to your doctor or nurse if you think this applies to you.

## How do I prepare for the scan?

Please do not eat or drink anything for two hours before your fibroscan. If you need to, you can take small sips of water or clear fluid, but avoid drinking large amounts of fluid. Ideally we ask you not to drink alcohol before your scan. You should continue taking any prescribed medication.

You will not need to remove any clothing for the scan, but we will need to expose the right side of your abdomen (tummy). Therefore, we recommend that you wear a top and trousers or a skirt on the day of your test. You will not need to remove any jewellery near the site of the scan, such as a belly button piercing.

## What happens during a fibroscan?

You will be asked to lie on your back with your right arm raised behind your head. The nurse will apply a water-based gel to your skin and place a probe on the right side of your abdomen (tummy) with minimal pressure. The nurse will take a minimum of 10 readings. You will feel a slight vibration / pulse against the skin each time a reading is taken. It should not hurt and will make no noise.

## How long will the scan take?

The scan should take between 10 and 20 minutes to perform.

## What aftercare is required?

You can go straight home after your fibroscan. You do not need an escort to take you home. You may eat and drink normally after your Fibroscan.

## When will I get the results?

The result will be sent to the doctor/nurse who referred you for the fibroscan and they will discuss it with you at your next outpatient appointment.

## What should I do if I cannot attend my appointment?

If you cannot attend your fibroscan appointment then please contact **0300 303 8360** so that it can be re-arranged.

## Special requirements

If you have vision, mobility or access issues please contact **01273 664541** for further advice/information.

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### Disclaimer

The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is in no way intended to replace professional clinical advice by a qualified practitioner.

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