

Diagnosing Non Hodgkin's Lymphoma (NHL) - A Quick Guide



Contents

This is a brief summary of the information on 'Diagnosing non Hodgkin's lymphoma (NHL)' from CancerHelp UK. You will find more detailed information on the website.

In this information there are sections on

- Tests for non Hodgkin's lymphoma
- Further tests for non Hodgkin's lymphoma
- After the tests
- Questions for your doctor

Tests for non Hodgkin's lymphoma

Most people begin by going to see their GP. Your doctor will ask you about your general health and examine you. They may take a blood test to check your general health. As most causes of enlarged glands are not serious, your doctor may suggest examining you again in a couple of weeks. If the glands stay enlarged and there is no obvious reason, your GP may want to refer you to the hospital for tests.

If you are referred to hospital

At the hospital the doctor will examine you again and ask you questions about any other illnesses you have had recently or in

the past. You will probably have a chest X-ray and blood tests to check your general health.

Lymph node biopsy

The only way to get a definite diagnosis of the cause of an enlarged lymph node is to remove it and look at it under the microscope. This is called a lymph node biopsy. It is a small operation. It is usually done in hospital under a general anaesthetic but sometimes under a local anaesthetic.

For most people, it is a very anxious time waiting for the biopsy result. It takes a few days to do the tests. It may take up to a week for the results to come through. You can talk to your GP in the meantime if you are worried. Your result may be sent to your GP or you may be asked to come back to the hospital to an out patient clinic.

Further tests for non Hodgkin's lymphoma

If lymphoma cells were found in the lymph node you had biopsied, your doctor will want you to have a lot more tests to find out whether the disease has spread. The doctors will need to know which parts of your body are affected.



You are likely to have blood tests, a CT scan, a PET scan, a bone marrow test and an ultrasound scan.

Tests occasionally used in lymphoma

Most people have one or two other tests, as well as the ones above. You may have

- Lumbar puncture
- Endoscopy
- X-ray of the gullet and stomach (barium meal)
- MRI scan or bone scan
- Intravenous urogram

After the tests

Waiting for your results is a very anxious time for most people. While you are waiting it may help to talk to a close friend or relative about how you are feeling. Or you may want to contact a cancer support group to talk to someone who has been through similar experiences.

What to ask your doctor about non Hodgkin's lymphoma tests

- What tests will I have?
- Why do I have to have these tests?
- What will the tests show?
- Are any of the tests painful?
- Are there any risks with any of these tests?
- Can I eat normally before these tests?
- What are the side effects of these tests?
- Do I have to stay in hospital for any of the tests?

- Can I bring someone with me when I have the tests?
- How long will it take to get the results of the tests?
- Who will give me the test results?

More information

For more information about non Hodgkin's lymphoma (NHL), visit our website

<http://cancerhelp.cancerresearchuk.org>

You will find a wide range of detailed, up to date information for people affected by cancer, including a clinical trials database that you can search for trials in the UK. You can view or print the information in a larger size if you need to.

For answers to your questions about cancer call our Cancer Information Nurses on **0808 800 4040**
9am till 5pm Monday to Friday

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