

HAVING A FIBROSCAN®

If your doctor suspects that you may have damage to your liver, they may recommend that you have a FibroScan®.

What is a Fibroscan?

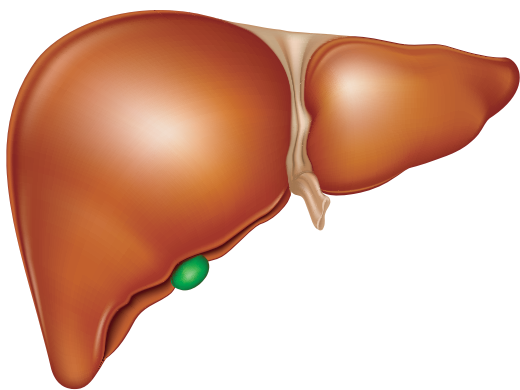
It is a scan very similar to an ultrasound but much quicker. This is a new technique designed to estimate the amount of scarring without having to do a liver biopsy. This machine has been extensively studied and is used worldwide.

How is it done?

It is a painless procedure which involves a probe being passed over the top right area of your abdomen. Your Fibroscan will be carried out at the Gastroenterology outpatient department.

What are the benefits?

The results of the scan can help your doctor find out about the level of damage that affects your liver, and decide what treatment you might need. It is helpful for measuring the degree of liver damage in people with many types of liver diseases including: hepatitis B, C and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease. It can also estimate the amount of fat content in your liver ('steatosis' level) if you have a fatty liver.



What are the risks?

There are no risks involved. It is painless and not invasive (meaning it's not carried out inside your body and does not break the skin).

What if I choose not to have a Fibroscan?

If you don't have the scan it will be more difficult for your doctor to accurately diagnose the

condition of your liver and to decide the best treatment for you. This could mean that eventually your liver may become seriously damaged.

Are there any alternatives to this method?

An alternative to having a Fibroscan is to have a liver biopsy (where a needle is inserted into your liver to remove a very small piece of it which can then be analysed in a laboratory). This is a more invasive procedure, and your medical staff will be able to discuss the risks of it with you if you have further questions.

How will I be prepared for having a FibroScan?

You will be instructed to fast from the night before the test or six hours before the procedure. When you attend the outpatient department the nurses will prepare you for the procedure by lying you down on a bed and exposing the upper right side of your abdomen (where your liver is situated), so that the doctor can perform the scan. No other special preparation is needed.

How is the procedure done?

A FibroScan® examination is composed of 10 easy acquisitions. You will be asked to lie on your back with your right arm raised above your head. The probe is placed on the skin at a spot in line with your underarm between the ribs. You may feel a slight click but there is no pain. A numerical liver stiffness measurement (LSM) is calculated after 10 readings. From this measurement we can give you an estimate as to the severity of your liver scarring (fibrosis). The examination usually lasts 10-15 minutes and you will have an immediate report.

Are there any limitations of FibroScan?

We do not expect that the liver stiffness measurement will be accurate in all cases and further tests including a liver biopsy may still be needed to confirm the readings and the cause of your liver disease. However, it has been proven to be an excellent non-invasive means of measuring liver fibrosis.

Will I need it again in the future?

You may only require a single measurement or your doctor may recommend that you have a FibroScan periodically (eg.: every 6 to 12 months), according to your underlying liver disease and the fibrosis level.