

# Diagnosing Hodgkin Lymphoma

## A Quick Guide

### Contents

This is a brief summary of 'Diagnosing Hodgkin lymphoma' from our website. You will find more detailed information on there. In this information there are sections on

- Tests for Hodgkin lymphoma
- Further tests for Hodgkin lymphoma
- What to ask your doctor

You can view this information in a larger print on our website.

### Tests for Hodgkin lymphoma

If you are worried about an unexplained lump, you are most likely to start by going to see your GP. Many people go to their GP with unexplained lumps in the neck, armpit or groin but most of them will not have lymphoma.

Your doctor will ask you about your 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 you are referred to a hospital

If the glands stay enlarged with no other obvious cause, your GP may want to refer you to a hospital for tests. At the hospital the doctor will examine you again and ask you questions about any other illnesses you have had. You will probably have a chest X-ray and blood tests.

### Lymph node biopsy

Lymph nodes form a network of glands throughout the body – particularly in the armpits, neck and groins. They drain away waste fluid, waste products and damaged cells, and contain cells that fight infection. The only way to be certain about why a lymph node is enlarged is to remove it and look at it under the microscope. This is called a lymph node biopsy. It is a small operation, usually done in hospital under a general anaesthetic. When you wake up, you will have a few stitches where the lymph node has been removed. You will probably be able to go home the same day.

### Checking out other symptoms

If you have any other symptoms, apart from enlarged nodes in your neck, armpit or groin, your doctor may arrange for you to have a CT scan.

### Further tests for Hodgkin lymphoma

If Hodgkin lymphoma cells are found in your lymph node biopsy, your doctor will want you to have other tests to find out if there is lymphoma in other areas of your body. You may have:

- Blood tests
- A chest X-ray
- Scans (CT, MRI, PET, PET-CT or ultrasound)
- A bone marrow test
- Other tests, depending on your symptoms

### After the tests

Your doctor will ask you to go back to the hospital when your test results have come through. This is bound to take a little time, even if only a day or two. It is a very anxious time for most people. 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 diagnosing Hodgkin lymphoma

- What tests are you going to do?
- 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 and drink normally beforehand?
- Are there any side effects afterwards?
- Do I have to stay in hospital for any of the tests?
- How long will they take?
- Can I bring someone with me when I have the tests?
- How long will the results take?
- Who will give me the results?

**For more information**, visit our website <http://www.cruk.org/about-cancer>

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. Our information is based on the best current scientific evidence and reviewed regularly by leading clinicians and experts in health and social care.

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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