

GUIDELINES FOR SENDING NERVE BIOPSIES

Sending a Nerve Biopsy Specimen to the Neuropathology Department

Prior Notification:

All peripheral nerve biopsy procedures should be pre-booked through the Neuropathology Department Office if possible. Neuropathology Request Forms (NP/MGT/FM/011) are available from the neuropathology secretaries and a nerve biopsy kit including a petri dish, cling film, universal and request form can be sent.

Contact 0117 414 2402/3 or email neuropathologysecretaries@nbt.nhs.uk

If in doubt about the choice of biopsy site, please discuss the case with a consultant neuropathologist before booking the procedure.

Early on the day of the procedure contact the laboratory (0117 414 2400) to provide us with an expected delivery time for the specimen. The procedure should be scheduled early enough in the day to ensure the specimen arrives at the laboratory by 3pm. Arrangements for delivering the specimen to the Neuropathology Department should be made in advance to minimise the time between taking the biopsy and its delivery to the laboratory.

The Biopsy Procedure:

Please note the following guidelines for taking a specimen:

- Normally the sural nerve is sampled. This biopsy specimen should be at least 2cm in length, providing sufficient tissue for frozen sectioning, paraffin wax processing for light microscopy, and electron microscopy.
- The specimen should not be tethered or pinned in any way.
- To prevent desiccation, the specimen(s) should be wrapped in cling-film and placed in a labelled universal container for transport to the laboratory.
- Ensure that there is **no specimen contact with any fluid**, for example fixative or saline solutions.
- In some cases, frozen sectioning may not be necessary, in which case the specimen can be fixed locally and transported less urgently to the Department of Neuropathology in Neutral Buffered Formalin. (If none is available, please notify the lab. The sample can be sent fresh, urgently, and placed in formalin upon arrival).

Refer to the appropriate section below for instructions on sending the biopsy samples to the laboratory.

Nerve Biopsy Procedures Performed by Other Departments at Southmead Hospital

Please schedule the procedure early enough in the day to ensure the specimen arrives at the laboratory before 3pm, allowing time for the specimen to be sampled and prepared immediately after its arrival.

Early on the day of the procedure, contact the laboratory (0117 414 2400) to provide us with an expected delivery time for the specimen. If a delay becomes unavoidable, please keep the laboratory staff informed.

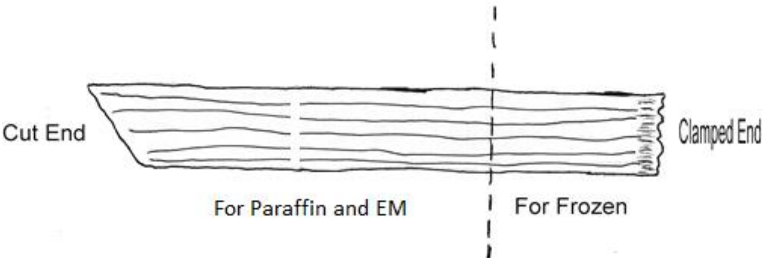
Make arrangements for delivering the specimen to the Neuropathology Department, bearing in mind that if sending the sample fresh, the time elapsing between taking the biopsy and its delivery to the laboratory should be kept to a minimum. If you anticipate a delay in delivery in excess of 15 minutes, liaise with a consultant neuropathologist or biomedical scientist; **contact the laboratory on x42400.**

<p>Packaging and Transportation</p>	<p>The specimen should be carefully wrapped in cling-film and put in a labelled universal container. The specimen must not come into contact with any fluid, including saline, formalin or other fixatives.</p> <p>The specimen container must be clearly labelled and placed in a sealable specimen bag.</p> <p>The specimen may be sent to the Neuropathology department via the pneumatic tube system or with the porters.</p> <p>If the specimen is taken out of hours, it can be placed in formalin.</p>
<p>Accompanying Information</p>	<p>Completed green Neuropathology request form, placed in the separate pocket of the specimen bag (if this has not previously been sent to the department).</p>
<p>Point of Delivery</p>	<p>Pneumatic tube system – ensure that the department is telephoned (x42400) immediately prior to sending the specimen.</p> <p>By porter – preferably directly to Neuropathology Main Laboratory. Alternatively, the specimen can be delivered to Cellular Pathology Specimen Reception, Phase 2, Pathology Sciences Building. If delivered to Specimen Reception, ensure the Neuropathology Department is contacted by telephone so the sample can be collected immediately. Never leave the sample in Specimen Reception without speaking to a member of the Neuropathology team. It is imperative that the sample is dealt with in the quickest possible manner if fresh.</p>

Nerve Biopsy Procedures Performed at Other Hospitals

In order to provide a satisfactory diagnostic service for peripheral nerve biopsy specimens taken at locations away from Southmead Hospital, it is important that the following guidelines are followed:

- In addition to booking the procedure with the Neuropathology Department in advance, the laboratory should be contacted early on the day of the procedure to provide an estimated time of delivery. The laboratory should also be informed when the specimen has been despatched. **Contact number: 0117 414 2400.**
- Please ensure if sending fresh the sample reaches that laboratory by 3pm (Mon-Fri).
- Transport arrangements for delivering the specimen to the Neuropathology Department must be made in advance, bearing in mind that the time elapsing between taking the biopsy and its delivery to the laboratory should be kept to an absolute minimum.
- **The courier should be on standby to receive the specimen as soon after resection as possible and should immediately transport it to the Neuropathology Department at Southmead Hospital.** Ensure that the courier is aware of the importance of hand delivering the sample directly to a member of the Neuropathology team and that they should **NEVER** leave the sample in Specimen Reception without speaking to a member of the Neuropathology team first.
- If there is no need to send a fresh specimen, it can be placed in formalin fixative, which reduces the urgency of delivering the specimen.

<p>Specimen Preparation</p>	<p>Ideally, the excised specimen should be at least 2cm in length. After excision, place it on a piece of dental wax <i>at room temperature.</i></p> <p><u>If sending fresh tissue:</u></p> <p>Fresh nerve biopsies should be delivered to the Neuropathology Department within 1 hour of being taken. The specimen should be carefully wrapped in cling-film and put in a labelled universal container. The specimen must not come into contact with any fluid, including saline, formalin or other fixatives.</p> <p>If you think the sample will take longer than 1 hour to arrive, then carry out the following –</p> <p>Divide transversely (approx. 2:1 ratio) into two pieces. Place the larger piece (at least 1cm long) into formalin fixative for paraffin histology and EM. The smaller piece should be kept fresh, carefully wrapped in cling-film and placed into a labelled universal container. The fresh piece must not come into contact with any fluid, e.g., formalin or saline.</p> 
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	<p><u>If sending fixed tissue only:</u></p> <p>The entire nerve biopsy can be immersed in formalin and sent in a labelled formalin pot.</p>
Packaging and Transportation	<p>The specimen pots must be clearly labelled and placed in a seal-able specimen bag. Any outer packaging such as a box or envelope should be appropriately labelled with the Neuropathology Department's address and contact number.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Address: Department of Neuropathology Pathology Sciences Building (Phase 2) Southmead Hospital Bristol BS10 5NB Contact number: 0117 414 2400</p> <p>Do not pack the specimen container with ice: if the courier is delayed and the specimen begins to freeze slowly, the examination and diagnosis will be compromised. The specimen will also be damaged if it comes into contact with any water formed if the ice begins to melt.</p>
Accompanying Information	<p>Completed green Neuropathology request form, placed in the separate pocket of the specimen bag (if this has not previously been sent to the department).</p>
Point of Delivery	<p>Preferably directly to Neuropathology Main Laboratory.</p> <p>Alternatively, the specimen can be delivered to Cellular Pathology Specimen Reception, Phase 2, Pathology Sciences Building. If delivered to Specimen Reception, ensure the Neuropathology Department is contacted by telephone so the sample can be collected immediately. Never leave the sample in Specimen Reception without speaking to a member of the Neuropathology team. It is imperative that the sample is dealt with in the quickest possible manner.</p> <p>Specimens from other hospitals can be sent to the Department by courier service provided they are appropriately and securely packed. In this case, please notify the laboratory (0117 414 2400) that you are sending the sample and provide an estimated time of arrival.</p>

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