How to Prepare: Kidney Biopsy

Good preparation makes the biopsy safer — most of it is about bleeding risk, because the kidney is rich in blood vessels:

- ☐ Blood tests in the days before: your team will check your blood count, clotting (coagulation) and kidney function, and usually your blood group. Tell them about any bleeding or bruising problems you have had.
- ☐ Blood-thinning medicines: aspirin, clopidogrel, warfarin, apixaban and similar drugs, and anti-inflammatory painkillers such as ibuprofen, are usually paused for a few days before. Ask your team exactly which of YOUR medicines to stop and when — never stop a prescribed medicine without asking.
- ☐ Blood pressure matters: high blood pressure raises bleeding risk, so it is checked and treated before the biopsy. Take your blood-pressure medicines as instructed.
- ☐ Fasting: you will usually be asked not to eat or drink for several hours beforehand (often from midnight), especially if sedation is planned. Follow the instructions you are given.
- ☐ Tell the team about allergies (especially to local anaesthetic or antiseptics), any fever or infection, and — for women — if there is any chance you could be pregnant.
- ☐ Plan the day: you will rest in bed for several hours afterwards and stay under observation, often overnight. Arrange a lift home and a quiet next day or two.

What to expect

Before	You will change into a gown and have a small cannula placed in a vein. Your blood pressure and blood tests are rechecked. You lie face down on the table, usually with a pillow under your belly to bring the kidney into the best position.
During	The skin is cleaned and numbed with a local anaesthetic injection — a brief sting, then pressure rather than pain. Guided by the ultrasound picture, the doctor advances a thin biopsy needle through the back into the kidney and takes one or more tiny cores of tissue.
After	You rest in bed, on your back, for several hours (often four to six, sometimes overnight) while nurses check your blood pressure and pulse and look at your urine — the main early concern is bleeding. A small amount of blood in the urine is common at first and usually clears.

Medically reviewed by Dr. Mohamed Ibrahim, MD, PhD — physician-scientist. Last reviewed October 2026.

This handout is general information to help you prepare; it does not replace the instructions from your own care team. If your clinic gave you different instructions, follow theirs.