

## Information Sheet | Canberra Health Services

# Muscle and Nerve Biopsies

ACT Pathology coordinates a referral service of muscle and nerve biopsy specimens to the Neurology Laboratory at the University of Sydney.

The protocol for collection, handling and transport of these specimens is as follows:

It would be preferred that the collection of muscle and nerve biopsies be arranged to take place at Canberra Hospital campus or National Capital Private Hospital. If the collection is occurring outside Canberra Hospital, please liaise with the SRA and Anatomical Pathology teams for advice on collection requests.

- Collection of muscle and nerve biopsy samples must only be collected Monday through to Wednesday only.
- Thursday collection is only available after discussion and approval from Dr Min Wang at the Neurology laboratory, University of Sydney. Phone: (02) 9114 4280
- Nerve samples are to be collected between 8am and 2pm. Nerves are then 'fixed' here in the Anatomical department and sent overnight to the University of Sydney.
- Muscle samples are to be collected between **12pm and 2pm**. These are then immediately packed and sent overnight to the University of Sydney.
- Collecting muscle samples before 12pm means the biopsy is likely to be greater than 24 hours old when received into Sydney this will compromise the results of testing.
- Alert ACT Pathology by phoning specimen referrals 5124 2845 or CSR manager 5124 2468 at least 24 hours prior to procedure.
- Please also email the below addresses with patient details and intended date of collection:
  - Pathology Sendaway Supervisor                      CHSSpecimenReception@act.gov.au
  - Anatomical Pathology                                      CHS.APAdmin@act.gov.au
  - Neurology Department Sydney                      Neurology.lab@sydney.edu.au
- Notify the neurology team at the Neurology Laboratory, University of Sydney on (02) 9114 4280 or Fax (02) 9114 4291 that you are sending a biopsy specimen.
- If quantitative biochemistry is required (in addition to histology), the Biochemistry Muscle Unit should also be notified on (02) 9515 8572.

## The specimen

- Ideally the muscle specimen should be a 1cm x 1cm cube, and the nerve specimen should be 3cm long.
- It is important that no local anaesthetic comes into contact with the specimen. (Fascia may be included if microscopic examination is required, otherwise it is generally not necessary.)
- The Anatomical Pathology staff divides nerve biopsies according to protocol before giving specimen to Specimen Referrals. Muscle biopsies should be already wrapped in cotton gauze dampened with normal saline (do not soak the specimen in saline) and place in a sterile yellow top specimen container.

- Any specimens received in formalin are also delivered to the relevant laboratory at Sydney University and not processed by our laboratory.
- All specimens received in the Anatomical Pathology are given to Specimen Referrals for packaging and sendaway.

## Packing

- Packing of the specimen is the responsibility of ACT Pathology. ACT Pathology arranges transport of muscle and nerve biopsy specimens and must take responsibility for their packing.
- Suitable packaging may be collected from Pathology Specimen Reception on Level 2, Building 10 (contact 5124 2845)
- The yellow top container containing the specimen must be placed inside a plastic screw top container. It should be wrapped in bubble wrap or similar to protect it from damage.
- The plastic screw top container is to be placed inside the Styrofoam box provided. Ice bricks may be packed around the container. Ice should not be used as the Styrofoam box is not watertight, and any sign of leakage will result in the shipment being rejected by the airline.
- The Styrofoam box is then placed inside the fibreboard outer box.
- Arrange transport to ACT Pathology by contacting Central Equipment Services on 0413 515 365
- Specimen MUST be delivered to Pathology ASAP to ensure overnight shipment. Any delays need to be discussed with the referral department on 5124 2845 and the Neurology Laboratory, University of Sydney on (02) 9114 4280.
- ACT Pathology will add address details and appropriate labelling to the outside of the package to comply with IATA regulations and will complete the necessary paperwork.

## Transport of Specimen

- ACT Pathology will arrange transport to Sydney for overnight delivery. Due to limited flights from Canberra to Sydney, same day delivery is no longer available.

All samples are sent overnight.

## Request information

The following information MUST accompany all specimens:

- Exact time and date of biopsy. University of Sydney require this so they can see how old the sample is when received into their laboratory. Clearly mark the form and sample pot with these details.
- Precise identification of biopsy site e.g. name of muscle, right or left etc.
- Patient demographic details (Full Patient Name, DOB and/or UR Number).
- Referring doctor(s) (to whom reports may be sent) and their provider number(s), telephone and fax numbers.
- Relevant clinical information and tests including nerve conduction studies and EMG's.
- Patient's billing details (is patient a hospital public patient/defence/ private)

## Cost of testing

The expenses associated with this testing are journalled to the appropriate unit and are as follows:



- Testing approximately: \$350 -\$750
- Transport and packaging approximately: \$50

**For more information**

For more information contact:

Neurology Team	Neurology Laboratory	9114 4280
SRA Manager	Pathology Reception	5124 3992
Pathology Sendaway Supervisor	Pathology Reception	5124 7730



**Acknowledgement of Country**

Canberra Health Services acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the ACT and recognises any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region. We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and contribution to the life of this region.

ACT Pathology Publication PA12.12/ Edition:2

© Australian Capital Territory, Canberra 2024



**Accessibility** call (02) 5124 0000



**Interpreter** call 131 450

[canberrahealthservices.act.gov.au/accessibility](http://canberrahealthservices.act.gov.au/accessibility)

