A bone marrow biopsy and aspirate is a procedure to remove a small amount of bone marrow (aspirate) and inner core of the bone (biopsy) for a microscopic exam. Bone marrow is the spongy substance in the inner part of the bone where the different blood cells are made.

A bone marrow biopsy and aspirate may be done to:

- Evaluate an unexplained low blood cell count:
  - Low red blood cell count (anemia)
  - Low white blood cell count (leukopenia)
  - Low platelet count (thrombocytopenia)
- Diagnose and stage lymphoma
- Diagnose and monitor leukemia
- Evaluate iron level problems
- Determine the extent of a disease (staging)
- Evaluate the effectiveness of a treatment

During the Procedure

- You will be asked to lie on your side with your knees bent.
- A lab technician will be in the room to process the bone marrow specimen.
- The upper part of your hip will be uncovered. The area will be cleansed with an antiseptic. A sterile drape will protect the site.
- The doctor will inject a local anesthetic to numb the skin and bone covering the site. This may sting or burn.
- After the site is numb, the doctor will insert a needle and draw out the bone marrow. This sent to the pathology lab to be examined.
- You may feel some pressure or pain at the site while the doctor removes the marrow and bone sliver. This pain usually lasts a short time. To help you relax, take a deep breath.

After the Procedure

- A sterile pad will be held firmly over the site for several minutes. Then a small bandage will be taped in place.
- You will be asked to lie on your back for 30 minutes after the procedure.
- You will be monitored for 30 to 60 minutes for bleeding problems and pain control.
Your nurse will check the bandage for any signs of bleeding. If bleeding is present, the dressing will be replaced and pressure applied to the site for at least 5 minutes.

You will be asked to rate your pain on a scale of 0 to 10 – 0 being no pain and 10 being the worst pain you can have.

You may have some bruising at the biopsy site.

You may also have some mild soreness at the site. Your doctor will tell you what medicine you can take for the soreness.

Contact your nurse at once if you have any:

- Unusual redness at the biopsy site
- Swelling at the biopsy site
- Bleeding that does not stop after you apply pressure

The results of the biopsy will take 2 to 3 days to come back. Your doctor will discuss the results with you.

Talk with your doctor or nurse about any questions or concerns.