



Patient & Family Guide
2026

Having a FibroScan®

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www.nshealth.ca

Having a FibroScan®

Your health care provider has recommended that you have a test called a FibroScan®.

What is a FibroScan®?

- A FibroScan® is a special type of ultrasound that checks how stiff your liver is.
- A healthy liver is soft and elastic. If your test shows that your liver is stiff, you may have fibrosis (scarring) in your liver.
- A FibroScan® shows how much fibrosis you have.

Why do I need this test?

- A FibroScan® can help diagnose the amount of liver damage in people with liver diseases and conditions like:
 - › Viral hepatitis B and C
 - › Hemochromatosis (too much iron)
 - › Alcohol-related liver disease
 - › Liver disease caused by certain medications (like methotrexate)
 - › Metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD)
 - › Autoimmune diseases, like primary biliary cholangitis (PBC) and primary sclerosing cholangitis (PSC)

What will happen during the test?

- The test is done by a trained operator (a technician, nurse, or doctor).
- You will lie on your back with your right arm above your head.
- You will cross your right leg over your left leg. This will help to open up your rib spaces.
- We will put gel on the skin between your rib spaces. Then we will slide a probe over the area.
- You may feel a slight vibration from the probe during measurements. The test does not hurt.
- The test will take 5 to 10 minutes.

What are the benefits of this test?

- A FibroScan® can tell your health care provider how damaged your liver is and help them decide what treatment you may need.

What are the risks of this test?

- There are no risks to having a FibroScan®.
- In about 1 in 10 people, it can be hard to get an accurate (correct) result.

What are the risks of not having this test?

- If you choose **not** to have a FibroScan®, it will be harder for your health care provider to tell how much fibrosis is in your liver. This may make it hard for them to choose the best treatment for you.
- If you do not get the right treatment, your liver may become badly damaged over time.

Are there any other options?

- Instead of having a FibroScan®, you may be offered a liver biopsy.
 - › During a liver biopsy, your health care provider will put a needle in your liver and remove a very small piece of liver tissue. Your health care provider will explain what to expect before a liver biopsy.

How do I get ready for my test?

For 2 to 3 weeks before your appointment:

- **Do not drink alcohol.**
 - › This can cause the test to show more fibrosis than you really have.



For 3 hours before your appointment:

- **Do not eat or drink anything.** This will help the results to be more accurate (correct).



- **If you need to cancel your appointment, please tell us as soon as possible.** This will let us book someone else.
 - › We will arrange another appointment time for you.

When will I get results?

- You will get early results at the end of the test.
- Final reading of the results will be done by a liver specialist.
- Liver stiffness is measured in units called kilopascals (kPa). Results can range from 1.5 to 75 kPa.
- Your liver specialist may:
 - › Talk with you about the results and plan your treatment
 - or
 - › Send a letter with this information to your primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner)

What are your questions?

Please ask a member of your health care team. We are here to help you.

Notes:

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find all patient education resources here:
www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources

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Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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