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What Is FibroScan®?

FibroScan is a non-invasive medical test used to check the health of your liver. It works by measuring the stiffness of your liver tissue, which helps doctors understand if there is any damage, such as scarring (fibrosis) or fat buildup (steatosis). Unlike traditional liver biopsies, which require a needle to take a sample of liver tissue, FibroScan is quick, painless, and doesn't involve any needles.

How Does FibroScan Work?

FibroScan uses a technology called transient elastography. Here's how it works:

- **Vibration and Sound Waves:** The FibroScan device sends gentle vibrations and sound waves into your liver. You'll feel a slight vibration on your skin, but it's completely painless.
- **Measuring Stiffness:** The sound waves travel through your liver, and the speed at which they move gives an indication of how stiff your liver is. A healthy liver is soft and flexible, so the sound waves move slower. If the liver is stiff due to scarring or fat buildup, the waves travel faster.
- **Instant Results:** The device calculates the liver stiffness based on these measurements and provides instant results. The higher the stiffness, the more likely it is that there is fibrosis or other liver damage.

Why Is FibroScan Important?

The liver plays a crucial role in your overall health, filtering toxins from your blood, aiding digestion, and storing energy. When the liver is damaged by conditions like hepatitis, fatty liver disease, or excessive alcohol consumption, it can develop fibrosis or even cirrhosis (severe scarring). FibroScan helps doctors assess the extent of liver damage without invasive procedures.

Who Should Get a FibroScan?

FibroScan is commonly recommended for people with conditions that can lead to liver damage, such as:

- **Chronic Hepatitis B or C:** These viral infections can cause ongoing liver inflammation and damage.
- **Fatty Liver Disease:** Both alcoholic and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease can lead to liver scarring.
- **Alcohol Abuse:** Long-term excessive alcohol consumption can damage the liver.
- **Cirrhosis:** To monitor the progression of severe liver scarring.
- **Genetic Diseases (such as Hemochromatosis and Wilson's Disease)**



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How to Prepare for a FibroScan

Preparation for a FibroScan is minimal. You might be asked not to eat or drink anything for a few hours before the test, as this can affect the results. FibroScan requires no sedation of any kind. You may drive yourself to and from the test.

The procedure takes about five minutes. During the test, you'll lie on your back with your right arm raised above your head. A small probe is placed against your skin on the right side of your abdomen, and the scan is performed.

Conclusion

FibroScan is a simple, fast, and non-invasive way to check the health of your liver. It provides valuable information that can help guide your doctor in diagnosing liver conditions and planning the best treatment. If your doctor suggests a FibroScan, it's an easy and effective way to get a clear picture of your liver health.