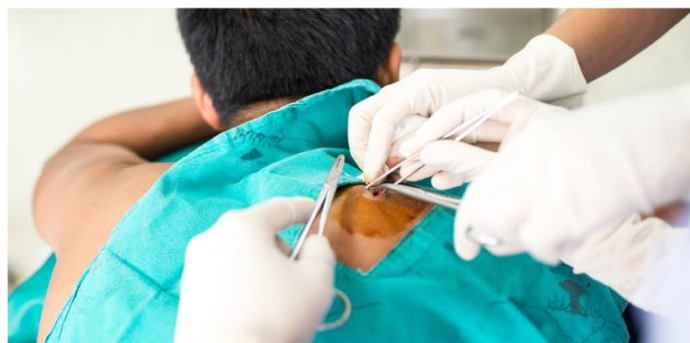


BIOPSY

What is a biopsy?



A biopsy is a procedure where a sample of the skin or tissue is removed and sent for microscopic examination. There are several types of biopsies such as punch, shave, excisional and incisional biopsies.



Why do I need a biopsy?

A biopsy is performed to determine if a suspicious mole or spot on the body is cancerous, or to assist in diagnosing a lesion or skin condition.

Note: A biopsy is a diagnostic tool

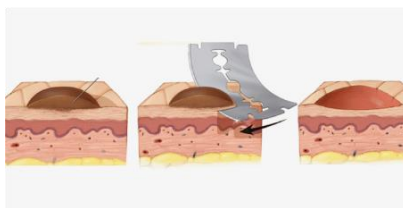
Types of biopsies



A punch biopsy is a minor procedure. It involves removing a small cylinder of skin with a disposable round stainless-steel tool. Punch biopsies range between 2 – 8 mm.

Method

The area is first numbed with local anaesthetic, so you will not feel any pain. Then the instrument is rotated into the deep layers of the skin leaving a circular hole which may need to be sutured depending on the size of the wound



A shave biopsy is a minor procedure. It can be used to sample or to completely remove a skin lesion in the upper portion of the skin using a sharp instrument such as a scalpel blade.

Method

The area will be numbed by local anaesthetic beforehand so you will not feel any pain. Sutures are not required and the wound should heal like a graze within 2-3 weeks. Sometimes a deep shave or aucherisation is used to remove a skin lesion, and this can take longer to heal








An excisional biopsy is a procedure that removes the entire area of abnormal skin, along with 2 mm of surrounding skin to give the pathologist the entire lesion to examine. This is often used to biopsy lesions where melanoma is suspected or where the diagnosis of melanoma needs to be excluded. An incisional biopsy involves excising a portion of a skin lesion. This is used when the skin lesion is large or in location which makes complete excision difficult. It is also used to diagnose some rashes

Method

For excisional and incisional biopsies, the area is numbed with local anaesthetic, so you will not feel any pain. After the tissue is removed, the wound will require sutures

BIOPSY

What happens next?

-  After the procedure you should keep the biopsy site dry for 24-48 hours, depending on the type of biopsy. You can then wash the wound with soap and water.
-  Take paracetamol for pain relief if needed and avoid taking ibuprofen and aspirin (unless prescribed) as they can increase bleeding.
-  If you have any increasing pain, redness or concern contact the clinic as this may be a sign of infection.
-  Discuss with your doctor how you will receive the biopsy results.
-  Discuss care of the biopsy site with your doctor

Possible complications of biopsies

Bleeding

Bleeding can occur after the procedure and is more common in people who are taking blood thinning medication. If you have any bleeding put firm pressure on the wound with a bandage or clean cloth for 15-20 minutes

Infection

A bacterial infection of the wound can occur. This is increased with some health conditions such as diabetes or some sites such as the legs or near the groin. Signs of infection are increasing pain or increasing redness. Contact the clinic if this occurs.

Scarring

It is common for a scar to form at the biopsy site. Some areas of the body such as the chest are more likely to result in excessive (hypertrophic or keloid) scars in some people. This is more common in darker skin types.

Nerve Injury

The area of the biopsy can occasionally become numb. This usually resolves with time. Very rarely and in certain body locations nerve injury can occur.

Persistence or Recurrence of the Skin Lesion

Some biopsies deliberately remove only part of a lesion, so the lesion will persist or grow unless treated. It is possible that some lesions which initially appeared to be completely removed with the biopsy recur later.

Doctors Notes