

Oral surgery and restorative dentistry

Biopsies in minor oral surgery

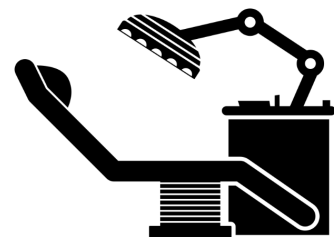
Information for patients, relatives and carers

What is a biopsy?

- A biopsy is a procedure where a small piece of tissue is removed from an area of your body so that it can be looked at closely under a microscope.
- A biopsy can remove an area completely (an excisional biopsy). This is usually only appropriate for small lumps or swellings.
- Occasionally a small piece of an abnormal area is removed to confirm a diagnosis (an incisional biopsy).

How is it done?

- We will give you an injection to numb the area (local anaesthesia) which means that you will feel no pain during the procedure. You will still feel pressure.
- The injection takes a couple of minutes to work.
- The biopsy usually leaves a small hole that often requires stitching. Usually, the stitches used are dissolvable and take around two weeks to disappear. This means you don't need to come back to have them taken out.
- The whole process usually takes 15 to 30 minutes.



Is there much soreness or swelling?

- There can be some pain or swelling after the surgery.
- Usually, the discomfort wears off within a few days.
- You can take painkillers following the advice of your surgeon.

Will there be much bleeding?

- The bleeding will stop quickly after the operation.
- You might notice blood in your saliva on the first day. More persistent bleeding can happen, but this is rare.
- If it does bleed, apply pressure over the area for at least ten minutes with damp gauze or a clean towel. If the bleeding continues, please contact the department.
- If bleeding does not stop, please contact NHS 111 (NHS out of hours helpline) or go to Accident & Emergency.



Will I need to take time off work?

- This largely depends on your job. If you have to do strenuous activities (heavy lifting or physical activity) or public speaking, then it is best to take the day off.
- Most people can return to work later the same day.

What should I do when I get home?

- Be careful not to bite numb areas of your mouth.
- On the day of surgery, you should avoid rinsing your mouth out vigorously as this could cause bleeding.
- You should clean your teeth normally, including the teeth next to the site of the biopsy. If you find that food catches around the stitches, then gently rinse the area with a mouthwash or warm salt water (dissolve a teaspoon of kitchen salt in a cup of warm water) on the day after surgery.

What should I avoid?

- Please do not smoke on the day of the procedure and for one week after as this makes it harder for your mouth to heal.
- Please do not run or cycle to and from your appointment as this



will increase your blood pressure and can cause the surgical site to bleed. Do not exercise for –two to three days after your appointment.

Will I need another appointment?

- Since the stitches are dissolvable you won't always need a review appointment. You will usually still be given one so that we can talk to you about the results of your biopsy.
- Sometimes we can do this over the phone if you prefer.

Should I be worried?

- It is natural to be worried about undergoing any operation, even a small one like this. Many patients jump to the worst conclusion and assume that biopsies are only ever taken when cancer is suspected.
- Please remember this is not the case. The majority of samples are confirmed as being non-cancerous (benign). If you are worried, please tell the surgeon straight away. They can help reassure you and answer any questions you have. They will fully explain the procedure and the process to you.

What about biopsy results?

- It can take a few weeks for your results to come back.
- A clinician will talk to you about the results, explain any diagnosis and tell you if you need any further treatment.

Hours and contact information

- Monday to Thursday: 08.30 to 17.00
- Friday: 08.30 to 15.00

Phone number: **020 3313 0403**

Oral surgery clinics are open on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

Restorative dentistry clinics are open on Wednesday and Thursday.

How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3312 7777** (10.00 – 16.00, Monday to Friday). You can also email PALS at imperial.pals@nhs.net The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street
London W2 1NY

Email: ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net

Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team:
imperial.communications@nhs.net

Wi-fi

Wi-fi is available at our Trust. For more information visit our website: www.imperial.nhs.uk

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