Skin Biopsy

A skin biopsy involves removing a round section of skin a few millimetres in size to be sent for analysis. This procedure will help establish a diagnosis for the skin complaint for which you sought medical care.

You now have a small, round wound where your skin sample was removed. It will take a couple of weeks for this wound to heal, and you will be left with a small, white scar at the biopsy site.

Will I experience pain afterwards?

The local anaesthetic will begin to wear off after 1–2 hours. Ordinarily, biopsy patients feel no pain after their procedure, but in the unlikely event that you experience discomfort, you can take over-the-counter painkillers containing paracetamol (e.g., Alvedon or Panodil) to ease the pain. Avoid other types of painkillers, since these can prevent your blood from clotting and thereby cause a postoperative bleeding.

How should I care for my wound?

- Keep the dressing dry for the first 48 hours.
- Remove the dressing after 48 hours have passed. Wash your wound with soap and water. In some cases, we may have used an agent containing ferric chloride to stop the bleeding that turns wounds yellowish-black in colour. This substance is harmless and can be washed off.
- Pat the area dry after washing. Apply a new, loose weave, breathable dressing as needed (e.g., if your wound begins to weep) and protect your wound from contamination in dirty environments.
- Wash your wound once a day according to the above instructions until it has healed.
- If your biopsy wound is on your lower leg, you should wear a compression stocking until it has healed.
- Avoid saunas and swimming pools until your wound has healed.

Bleeding

It is unusual for a skin biopsy wound to bleed. Nevertheless, if your wound should begin to bleed, sit down and press down firmly and continuously on the dressing for at least 15 minutes. Be aware that you are likely to develop bruising if your biopsy sample was taken from a delicate area, such as close to your eyes.

Signs of infection

You can expect your wound to be red, swollen and tender for the first few days after your biopsy. While infections after biopsies are uncommon, if your wound suddenly becomes more painful, or becomes warmer/redder/more swollen, it may be infected. In that case, you should contact us or a primary healthcare provider.

Your skin biopsy sample will be sent for examination under a microscope. You will generally be informed of the results within 6–8 weeks via either letter or phone, as agreed upon with your doctor.

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