



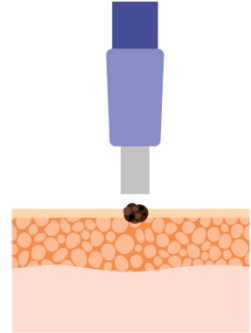
SKIN BIOPSY

What is a skin biopsy?

A skin biopsy refers to a process of extracting skin tissue for diagnostic purposes.

A local anaesthetic is injected in and around the area. In a "punch biopsy", a sterile cylindrical device is used to extract a small area of skin at or around the affected area. The wound will be stitched up. In a "shave biopsy", a sterile razor or surgical blade is used to remove a layer of skin tissue.

Bleeding from the wound will be stopped by using either a chemical compress or by electrocautery. An ointment will be applied on the wound. The wound is then covered with a dressing.



What are the risks and complications of the procedure?

Bleeding may sometimes occur. Apply firm constant pressure for ten minutes; the bleeding will usually stop. Itch is common. Avoid scratching to prevent scarring.

After a punch biopsy, there will be a small straight scar which is permanent, but it will not be very visible. A keloid (an overgrowing scar) may develop on certain sites, but this is very rare.

After a shave biopsy, there may be an area of pigmentation which generally fades with time. The surface of the skin may become slightly indented. Keloid formation is rare.

Wound infection is uncommon. Keep the wound clean and apply the topical treatment prescribed regularly.

How can I take care of the wound?

- Keep it clean and covered until stitches are removed.
- You may shower as per normal but avoid rubbing or scrubbing the wound. Gently pat it dry with a soft clean towel after shower
- You may take painkillers (e.g. paracetamol) for relief of pain
- Change the dressing if it is wet, dirty or soaked.

When to seek further treatment?

Seek medical consultation with your doctor or general practitioner if any of the following conditions occurs:

- Fever of 38°C and above
- Redness, warmth, swelling and foul-smelling discharge from the treatment site
- Severe bleeding from the wound
- Severe pain that is not relieved by pain medication

