

Maxillofacial Unit

Oral (Mouth) Biopsy

This leaflet has been designed to improve your understanding of any forthcoming treatment and contains answers to many of the commonly asked questions. If you have any other questions that the leaflet does not answer or would like further explanation, please ask.

What is a biopsy?

A biopsy is a simple procedure where we remove a small piece of tissue from the lining of your mouth or skin of the head and neck. We may remove an area completely (an excisional biopsy) or only remove a small part of an abnormal area (incisional biopsy). The tissue sample is looked at closely under a microscope with an aim of establishing a diagnosis.

Excisional biopsy

This procedure is normally carried out when the lesion is small and only one area is affected. We aim to remove the entire lesion/ lump with this method. This is done by making a small cut and the wound will be normally stitched back together following this with 2 or 3 stitches. In certain cases, no stitches are required, and the wound is cauterized and left to heal.

Incisional biopsy

This procedure aims only to remove a smaller part of a lesion. This is usually carried out if the lesion affects more than one area of the mouth or skin, or if the lesion is larger. Again, this is done by making a small cut and may be closed afterwards with stitches. In certain cases, no stitches are required, and the wound is cauterized and left to heal.

Punch biopsy

A specific instrument makes a small hole in the lining of the mouth or skin. This is usually closed with stitches afterwards.

Bone biopsy

If there is a condition affecting the jaw bones, a small sample of bone may be removed by using a dental drill, through a cut in the gum. The cut is then closed back together using dissolving stitches. We also sample jaw cysts or lesions in a similar way. These can be longer procedures and can feel more like having a tooth out, your surgeon will go through any specific risks with you.

How is it done?

In most cases biopsies are carried out under local anaesthesia (an injection into the area to numb it). The injection takes a couple of minutes to work and means that the biopsy will be painless. The biopsy usually leaves a small hole that often requires stitching. In the majority of cases the stitches used are dissolvable and take around two weeks to disappear. The whole process (local anaesthetic injection, biopsy and stitching) usually takes around 20 minutes from start to finish.

Is there much soreness or swelling afterwards?

When the local anaesthetic wears off after a few hours there is relatively little in the way of pain. Occasionally it is necessary to take simple painkillers (eg Paracetamol, Ibuprofen). Usually any discomfort only lasts a few days. Mild localised swelling is normal and should resolve in a few days.

Will there be much bleeding?

Although there may be a little bleeding at the time of biopsy this usually stops quickly and is unlikely to be a problem if the wound is stitched.

Should the biopsy site bleed again when you get home this can usually be stopped by applying pressure over the area for at least 20 minutes with a dampened rolled up handkerchief or swab. If the bleeding does not stop, please contact the department or out of hours contacts below.

When can I return to work?

This largely depends on your job and how you feel after the procedure. Most people are able to return to work later the same day or the next day.

Are there any things I should 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, as this may cause bleeding. You should clean your teeth normally, including those teeth next to the site of the biopsy. If you find that food catches around the stitches then the area can be gently rinsed with a mouthwash or warm salt water (dissolve a teaspoon of kitchen salt in a cup of warm water) commencing on the day after surgery.

Will I need another appointment?

Since the stitches are dissolvable a review appointment is not always necessary but you will usually be given one so that the results of the biopsy can be discussed with you.

Should I be concerned?

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 benign (non-cancerous). If you are worried, please tell the surgeon straight away. They can help answer any questions you may have. They will fully explain the procedure and process to you.

Supporting Doctors and Dentists in Training

We train undergraduate and postgraduate medical and dental students. This means that doctors and dentists in training may be a part of your care and treatment.

All trainees are supervised closely by a fully qualified clinician. Please speak to one of our team if you have any questions or would prefer not to have a trainee involved in your care.

This leaflet is specific to the practice of Oral and Maxillo-Facial Surgery in the United Kingdom and is in addition to the generic guidance given in the GMC publications of Good Medical and Surgical Practice 2001 & 2002

If you have any comments about this leaflet or the service you have received you can contact :

Maxillofacial Unit
Huddersfield Royal Infirmary

Telephone (01484) 355737

www.cht.nhs.uk

If you would like this information in another format or language contact the above.

Potřebujete-li tyto informace v jiném formátu nebo jazyce, obraťte se prosím na výše uvedené oddělení

Jeżeli są Państwo zainteresowani otrzymaniem tych informacji w innym formacie lub wersji językowej, prosimy skontaktować się z nami, korzystając z ww. danych kontaktowych

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਪ੍ਰਾਚੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور فارمیٹ طرزبان میں درکار ہوں، تو برائے مہربانی مندرجہ بالا شعبے میں ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

"إذا احتجت الحصول على هذه المعلومة بشكل مغاير أو مترجمة إلى لغة مختلفة فيرجى منك الاتصال بالقسم المذكور أعلاه"