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Oral Biopsy



Patient information

Oral Biopsy



Oral (Mouth) Biopsy

This leaflet has been designed to improve your understanding of your forthcoming treatment and has answers to many of the commonly asked questions. Please ask if you have any other questions would like further explanation please ask.

What is a biopsy?

A biopsy is a simple procedure where a small piece of tissue is removed from an area so that it can be looked at closely under a microscope.

- **An excisional biopsy** removes the whole area. This is usually carried out for small lumps or swellings. Further treatment may not be necessary.
- **An incisional biopsy** involves removing a small piece of the abnormal area. This is carried out to confirm what something is. Then we can decide on the best treatment.

How is it done?

Most biopsies are carried out under local anaesthetic (an injection into the area to numb it). The injection takes a couple of minutes to work. The biopsy should be painless. The biopsy usually leaves a small hole that often requires stitching. In most cases dissolvable stitches are used which take around two weeks to disappear. The whole process (local anaesthetic injection, biopsy and stitching) usually takes around 15 minutes from start to finish.

If a General Anaesthetic is necessary, you will be admitted to Day Surgery to have the procedure and discharged the same day. It will be necessary to arrange for someone to collect and look after you for 24 hours after discharge

Is there much soreness or swelling afterwards?

The numbness wears off after a few hours. There is usually not much pain or swelling. However, occasionally you may need to take simple painkillers (eg paracetamol or ibuprofen). Any discomfort should only last for a few days. Tongue biopsies are usually more painful than biopsies of other areas of the mouth

Will there be much bleeding?

There may be a little bleeding at the time of the biopsy however, this usually stops very quickly. It is unlikely to be a problem once the wound is stitched. Should the biopsy site bleed again when you get home this can usually be stopped by applying pressure with a damp gauze or handkerchief over the area for at least 20 minutes. If the bleeding does not stop please contact the department.

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.

Are there any things I should do when I get home?

- Be careful not to bite numb areas of your mouth,
- For 24 hours avoid rinsing your mouth out vigorously as this may cause bleeding,
- You should clean your teeth normally, including those teeth next to the site of the biopsy.

- To prevent infection or food catching around the stitches, gently rinse three times a day with warm salt water (dissolve a teaspoon of kitchen salt in a cup of warm water) commencing 24 hours after surgery.
- Eat soft foods that can be fork mash able. Cold such as ice cream can be soothing.

Are there things I should avoid?

- No activity that can increase heart rate such as heavy lifting or exercise for 24 hours after surgery,
- No alcohol or smoking for minimum three days after procedure,
- No rinsing for 24 hours after the procedure,
- Avoid touching the surgical area with tongue or fingers,
- Avoid hot drinks for 24 hours after the procedure.

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.

How to contact us

Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery

[Watford General Hospital](#)

Vicarage Road

Watford

Hertfordshire WD1 8HB

Monday to Friday, 9.00am – 5.00pm

Tel: 01923 217205

Hospital switchboard: 01923 244366 - Ext. 3855

After 5pm and at weekends

Northwick Park Hospital

Tel: 020 8864 3232

Ask for bleep number 900, ask for the Oral Surgery SHO on-call

Taken from The British Association of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeons website. www.baoms.org.uk

PALS

If you need this leaflet in another **language, large print, Braille or audio version**, please call **01923 217198** or email westherts.pals@nhs.net.



Language



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For more information, on our Patient Advice and Liaison Service, visit our [website](#).
Or type in: bit.ly/4o3QVFJ

Where can I park?

Car parking at Watford General Hospital is available in the [multi-storey car park](#). It's pay on exit, so you only pay for the time you need. You can pay by cash or card. The post code for the car park is **WD18 0LT**.

The external car park ticket machines on all sites **only accept cash**. However, you can pay by card via the [Saba parking app](#) (excluding AMEX), or search Saba parking app at the [App store](#) or [Google play](#).

Please note: due to current redevelopment works at St Albans, parking is very limited.

For more information about travelling to our sites and travel concessions, visit our [website](#).

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