
SKIN BIOPSY

A SKIN BIOPSY IS A COMMON AND SIMPLE DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR DIAGNOSING PROBLEMS ON THE SKIN.

A skin biopsy is a common and simple diagnostic tool for diagnosing problems on the skin. Prior to your procedure, the skin is numbed with a simple and quick injection of local anesthetic called lidocaine so the procedure cannot be felt. There are two main types of skin biopsies used in different scenarios:

- 1 **Punch biopsy.** This biopsy is taken with a tool that looks like a cookie cutter. Once the skin is numbed, a small “plug” of skin is removed for examination under the microscope. Usually, a stitch is placed in the skin to speed up healing. A punch biopsy leaves a small linear scar on the skin.
- 2 **Shave biopsy.** This biopsy is taken with a tool that looks like a blade. Once the skin is numbed a small sample of skin is taken and the sore is left to heal from the bottom up. A shave biopsy often creates a circular scar.

THE RESULTS FROM THE SKIN BIOPSY TAKE 1-2 WEEKS TO RETURN.
WE WILL NOTIFY YOU OF THE RESULTS.

Preparing for your skin biopsy

There is no preparation needed for a skin biopsy. Most commonly, the skin biopsy is taken at your regular office visit. If your skin biopsy is planned in advance, you may want to refrain from taking things that may thin your blood, including alcohol, aspirin, ibuprofen, naproxen, garlic, fish oil, ginkgo biloba, etc. If you are on medications to thin your blood that were prescribed by your doctor, please DO NOT stop taking these medications.

Caring for your skin biopsy

Proper care of your skin biopsy site will improve the long-term appearance of the scar and lead to faster healing.

- 1 Leave the bandage in place for 12-24 hours after you leave the office
- 2 It is ok to shower the next morning after your procedure. Remove the bandage at the end of your shower and wash the area with a gentle cleanser, like Dove soap
- 3 After leaving the shower, pat the area dry and apply ointment (Vaseline, Aquaphor or Polysporin)
- 4 Cover with a bandage
- 5 Continue this routine daily until the wound is completely healed
- 6 Return to the clinic to have any stitches removed between 7 and 14 days, as recommended, depending on the location.
- 7 It is ok to take Tylenol for any discomfort. If the discomfort is not controlled by Tylenol, please contact the office at 435-602-1918
- 8 Avoid sun exposure for one year after the wound has healed by applying sunscreen or keeping the area covered
- 9 Consider a scar gel, like Strataderm, to improve the cosmetic appearance of the scar. The sunscreen should be applied after scar gel.

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What to expect after your skin biopsy

Cutting into the skin always creates a scar, but with proper care, the scar may “disappear” into the skin. In the first week after the procedure, it is normal to see mild redness on the direct periphery of the wound. The area may be a little tender to the touch, but the tenderness should get better daily. In general it takes 1-2 weeks for the skin biopsy to heal. The lower legs is an area where some skin biopsies may take more than 1 month to heal.

After healing, the wound will look pink for several months. The pink coloration will fade with time. If the scar becomes raised or uncomfortable, there are easy treatments to improve this. These treatments are usually covered by insurance. If you would like further cosmetic improvement of the scar appearance, we have laser treatments that can make the scar look better. These treatments are considered cosmetic and are not covered by insurance.

Things to avoid:

While your biopsy is healing, please avoid the following:

- Swimming or bathing without a waterproof bandage
- Sun exposure
- Exposing the wound dirty conditions

Please call us if you notice any of the following:

It is not normal to experience the following, as these can be signs of infection:

- Redness spreading distantly from the wound
- Increasing pain or tenderness
- Thick drainage associated with pain and redness
- Fevers or chills, fatigue or generally not feeling well.

Infection after skin biopsy is very uncommon, but if you experience the signs above, please contact the office at 435-602-1918.