

# **Oral (Mouth) Biopsy**

Patient information leaflet

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

Depending on the size of the lesion the biopsy may aim to remove an area completely (an excisional biopsy) or only a small piece of an abnormal area is removed to confirm a diagnosis (an incisional biopsy).

## How is it done?

Biopsies are usually done under local anaesthetic which means an injection will be used to numb the area and afterwards the procedure is meant to be painless. In most cases stitches are required and you will be instructed if they are dissolvable (take up to 2 weeks to disappear) or if they will need to be removed. The whole procedure takes around 15-30 minutes.

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## What to expect afterwards?

### Pain/swelling

After a few hours when the local anaesthetic wears off there might be some discomfort for which simple painkiller (Paracetamol, Nurofen) are usually enough. There is relatively little in the way of swelling.

### Bleeding

This is an unlikely problem if the wound is stitched. If it occurs it can usually be stopped by applying pressure over the area for at least 10 minutes with a gauze or a handkerchief. If the bleeding does not stop please contact the department.

### Infection

You will be instructed on wound care post operatively to prevent infection. Antibiotics are not usually required.

### Going back to work?

Most people feel able to return to work the same day, even though depending on your daily routine and how you feel after the procedure you might need to rest that day.

### Another appointment

You would be given one so that the results can be discussed with you.