

## Care of your wound following Diagnostic Punch Biopsy of the Skin

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### Relief of pain

The local anaesthetic that you have had will wear off over the next 1 to 2 hours. You may need to take simple pain relief, e.g. Paracetamol as directed on the manufacturer's packet to cover the next 12 to 24 hours. Aspirin should be avoided as it increases your risk of post-operative bleeding. Check with your GP if you have been prescribed other analgesia.

### Bleeding

The biopsy (sample site) will be checked for bleeding before you leave the department. If bleeding occurs at home, do not disturb the dressing. Apply a pad to the area and apply constant, firm pressure for a full 10 minutes. If possible, elevate or raise the area, e.g. arm or leg. If a small amount of bleeding persists apply pressure again for another full 10 minutes. If the wound is still bleeding, you will need to visit your **practice nurse** or **local Emergency Department** for assessment. If bleeding occurs Monday-Friday 9-5 you can contact the Dermatology Department. A clean dressing will be provided once bleeding has settled if this is necessary.

Be vigilant for bleeding if you take anticoagulants, e.g. Aspirin or Warfarin.

You will have been given a practice nurse letter, please remember to take this with you when you see the practice nurse.

### Stitches

Stitches will normally be removed in 5-14 days (your practice nurse letter has these details) at your own surgery by the practice nurse. In certain locations on the body stitches that dissolve or surgical glue can be used, you will be given instructions on how to care for these wounds.

You will need to book an appointment with the practice nurse well in advance of needing stitches removed or dressings renewed.

If you are concerned about discomfort when the stitch is removed, consider taking simple pain relief, e.g. Paracetamol, an hour before your appointment.

### Sport or activity

You should rest today if possible. Remember you have had a small operation and going shopping does not count as rest! Sport is best avoided for the next 3 days and up to one week if your skin sample has come from a place located over 'active' muscles, especially the legs or shoulders. Stretched stitches may mean a bumpy scar or cause a wound to gape or open.

### Bathing

Bathing should be avoided for the first 48 hours. If the dressing becomes wet it should be removed. Wash your hands and apply a clean dressing. A wet dressing increases your risk of infection. After 48 hours it is recommended to wash the wound with tap water and pat dry.

## The pathology result

This is normally available 4 weeks after the sample has been taken. The Dermatology Doctor will write to your GP explaining the result and any further treatment or action needed. We will send you a copy of the letter.

## Complications

The signs of infection can be any of the following:

- increasing pain at the site
- swelling
- redness
- a pus-like discharge

If you are concerned about any of the above, see your practice nurse promptly, taking your practice nurse letter with you. The practice nurse will be able to assess your wound if you suspect it is infected. If your practice nurse has concerns they can contact us. In working hours you can phone Dermatology for advice.

## Feedback

Comments and suggestions that give us feedback on our practice, e.g. delays in wound healing, pain or dressing problems, (and the good things as well) are helpful. You can contact us by writing to Clare Parkinson, Dermatology, Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital (Heavitree), Gladstone Road, Exeter EX1 2ED, if you think we could make a difference for others.

**Tel: 01392 405516 (Nursing)**

**or 01392 405511 (Administration)**

**or 01392 405512/3/4/5 (Secretaries)**

Answerphone, Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm

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