



Skin Biopsy: Care Instructions

What is a biopsy?

Your doctor has chosen to perform a biopsy of your skin. This involves taking a small piece of your skin and sending it to the lab to confirm what the lesion is, and to help determine if any further treatment is needed. It usually takes the labs up to 3 weeks to provide a report.

Care instructions:

- **Bandage:** The bandage applied today can come off tomorrow. You do not need to wear any bandage thereafter, but you may choose to do so (for example, to protect your clothing from staining). If you choose to wear a bandage, remember to change to a clean one every day.
- **Ointment:** Apply **Vaseline** (NOT POLYSPORIN) to the biopsy site 1-2 times per day, or more often if it seems to be drying out. **We do not recommend Polysporin** as studies have shown that it leads to worse healing.
- **Washing:** You may wash as normal starting tomorrow. It is good to clean the biopsy site daily. Be gentle: do not scrub the biopsy site, and gently pat dry.
- **Stitches:** If your biopsy site has stitches, they will either fall out on their own (*clear stitches*) or will be taken out at your follow-up appointment (*blue stitches*).
- **Pain:** You should not experience much pain following your biopsy. For mild pain, Tylenol or Advil may be used.
- **Bleeding:** You may experience a small amount of bleeding from the biopsy site during the first 24h. If so, apply firm pressure with some gauze directly to the site for 20 minutes **without stopping**. This will resolve most bleeding problems.
- **Signs of infection:** Biopsy sites rarely become infected. A small amount of redness is a normal part of healing. However, if your wound becomes very red/purple, hot or swollen, it may be infected. Contact your doctor if your wound develops these features.

Call your doctor if:

- *You experience severe pain that is not controlled with Tylenol and/or Advil*
- *Your pain **worsens** after 48h*
- *You experience bleeding that will not stop after 20 minutes of constant pressure*
- *The wound becomes very red, hot, painful or swollen*