

Care of the site after a skin biopsy

How do I care for my biopsy site?

- Remove gauze dressing in 24 hours.
- It is ok to shower and wash with a mild soap once the dressing is off. Dove®, Cetaphil® or Purpose® do not have perfumes or dyes. Wash the area gently, *do not* rub or scrape the site. Use your fingertips to clean the area, a washcloth will irritate it. Pat the site dry.
- Put Aquaphor® or Vaseline® ointment (from new tube) on the area 4-5 times a day. You want to make sure the site is *always* moist. If you see that the area is dry, apply the ointment. You do not want a scab to form. You should keep the area covered with a thin layer of ointment at all times until the site is completely healed (usually 10 days). **If a shave biopsy was done, the wound will take as long as a scraped knee to heal. You should apply ointment. A scab may form, but do not pick it.
- You do not need to cover the area with a gauze pad as long as the site is covered with ointment at all times. If your biopsy site is below the neck and clothes will touch the wound, you may cover the area with dry gauze (over the ointment). You should cleanse the area 2-3 times a day with water, apply Aquaphor® and cover with a new, dry gauze.

Can I resume my usual activities?

Avoid exercise, bending, straining, swimming or lifting any heavy objects the day of the biopsy and the day after.

Do I need to come back for another office visit?

If a suture was placed, you will be told if it will dry up and fall out or if you have to come back to have it removed.

How will I find out results of the biopsy?

The report of your biopsy takes 7 - 10 days. We will call you to discuss the results. We can only give you the results, but we may leave a message for you to call us with those who answer your phone or on an answering machine. If you would not like us to leave a message, please tell us so.

Will I have pain after surgery?

Most patients do not have a great deal of pain after the biopsy. If you have discomfort, you should take Tylenol® (acetaminophen) and apply ice to the area for 10 minutes.

Do I have to avoid alcohol or certain medicines after surgery?

Yes, you should avoid alcohol and the medicines below for 1 week after procedure as they may increase chance of bleeding:

- Ibuprofen (Motrin®, Advil®)
- Naproxen (Aleve®, Naprosyn®)
- Vitamin E
- Fish oil
- Products that have aspirin in them
- Aspirin - Unless your cardiologist or your primary doctor prescribes it as a daily medicine

When should I call my doctor?

Call your doctor if you have:

- Pain that gets worse a few days after the procedure
- A lot of swelling
- Bleeding which persists. If you have bleeding, apply firm pressure over the gauze pad for 20 minutes. If it doesn't stop after 20 minutes, apply pressure again for 20 minutes. If after 40 minutes, bleeding persists, call your doctor. It is normal to have some blood on your gauze pad after the procedure.
- A temperature above 100.5°F for 24 hours
- Redness, warmth, swelling, pus-like drainage at site.

How do I get in touch with my doctor?

- During normal business hours: Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. call our Nursing Phone Triage number at 215-728-4300 and specify that you need to speak with Robin Duvall, RN or Dr. Perlis.
- After normal business hours, call the operator at Fox Chase Cancer Center at 215-728-6900 and ask to speak with Dr. Perlis or Dr. Lessin.
- If you have a true emergency that cannot wait for a response, call 215-356-6942, which is Dr. Perlis' cell phone number.

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