

## After your skin biopsy

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This leaflet explains how to take care of your wound(s) when you leave hospital. If you have any questions, please see our contact details on the next page.

### Will I have any pain?

The local anaesthetic will begin to wear off about 30-40 minutes after the operation. If you experience any discomfort from the site of your surgery, you can take over-the-counter painkillers (eg. paracetamol or codeine) to help with this. **Always follow the instructions on the packet and never take more than the recommended dose.** Check that the painkillers will not react with any other medication you are taking and speak to your pharmacist if you have any allergies to any medication.

### How should I look after my wound?

Leave the hospital dressing on your wound(s) for the first 24 hours. You can have a wash within this time, as long as you keep the biopsy site(s) dry. After 24 hours, repeat the following instructions each day until we advise you to stop:

- Wash your wound(s) gently, under a shower if possible, using soap or shampoo.
- Gently clean away any scabs that may have formed; you may find a cotton bud helpful with this. Rinse with warm, clear water.
- Gently pat the wound(s) dry and cover with the antibiotic ointment that your doctor has prescribed you. If you have not been prescribed any ointment, then please use vaseline, which you can buy from most pharmacists and supermarkets. This helps to keep your wound moist, which should help it to heal faster, with less scarring.
- Apply a waterproof plaster (not fabric) over your wound daily until the wound(s) have healed.
- Try to avoid any undue exercise and exertion, which may cause your wound to stretch for at least six weeks.

## **Bruising**

This is common, especially if the area of your biopsy was close to your eyes. To help the bruising to heal:

- Avoid aspirin, unless your GP has prescribed this;
- Raise the area of your wound for a night or two if possible. For example if a biopsy was taken from your face, sleep with an extra pillow; and
- Apply an ice pack, wrapped in a cloth, to your wound site(s) for 20-30 minutes as soon as you arrive home.

## **Bleeding**

It is unlikely that your wound(s) will bleed - but if this does happen, don't panic. Sit down and press firmly over the dressing for 15 minutes. If you are at all worried, please phone the hospital using the contact details below.

## **Changes in your wound**

If there are any changes in your wound that you are concerned about eg. increasing redness/pain or discharge (which may be a sign of infection), **please see your GP or phone the hospital using the contact details below.**

## **Removal of stitches (sutures)**

We will have told you when your biopsy was over the date that your stitches should be removed. It is important that you contact the practice nurse at your GP surgery to carry out this procedure. If you have any difficulties please **phone the hospital using the contact details below.**

## **Stop smoking**

Smoking cigarettes slows down wound healing and makes scarring more unsightly. Try to avoid smoking for at least a week after your biopsy, longer if possible.

If you would like to give up smoking, please contact your GP or call the NHS Smoking Helpline on 0800 169 0 169.

## **Who can I contact for more information?**

If you have any questions about looking after your wound, please contact the Dermatology Day Care Unit between 8.30am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

**Telephone: 020 7794 0500 ext 33326.**

**NHS Direct** offers health information and advice from a specially trained nurse over the telephone 24 hours a day.

Tel: **0845 4647** or visit **[www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)**

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