



**Bradford Teaching Hospitals**  
NHS Foundation Trust

Maxillofacial Unit • Patient Information Leaflet

# Advice for Patients Prior to Oral (Mouth) Biopsy



*This leaflet has been designed to improve your understanding of your forthcoming treatment and answers to many of the commonly asked questions. If you have any other questions that the leaflet does not answer or would like further explanation please ask.*

## What is a biopsy?

There are two types of biopsy either an excision biopsy or an incisional biopsy. With an incisional biopsy only a small piece of an abnormal area is removed to confirm a diagnosis. With an excision biopsy the area may be completely removed but this is only appropriate for small lumps or swellings.”

The biopsy may aim to remove an area completely (an excision biopsy). This is usually only appropriate for small lumps or swellings.

Frequently, only a small piece of an abnormal area is removed to confirm a diagnosis (an incisional biopsy).

## How is it done?

In most cases biopsies are carried out under local anaesthesia (an injection into the area to numb it). The injection takes a couple of minutes to work and means that the biopsy will be painless.

The biopsy usually leaves a small hole that often requires stitching. In the majority of cases the stitches used are dissolvable and take around two weeks to disappear.

## Is there much soreness or swelling afterwards?

When the local anaesthetic wears off after a few hours there is relatively little in the way of pain or swelling. Occasionally it is necessary to take simple painkillers (e.g. paracetamol, ibuprofen). Usually any discomfort only lasts a few days.

## Will there be much bleeding?

Although there may be a little bleeding at the time of biopsy this usually stops very quickly and is unlikely to be a problem if the wound is stitched.

If the biopsy site bleeds again when you get home this can usually be stopped by applying pressure over the area for at least 15 minutes with a rolled up handkerchief or gauze. If the bleeding doesn't stop please contact the department".

## When can I return to work?

This largely depends on your job and how you feel after the procedure. Most people are able to return to work later the same day.

## Are there any things I should do when I get home?

Be careful not to bite numb areas of your mouth. On the day of surgery you should avoid rinsing your mouth out vigorously as this may cause bleeding. You should clean your teeth normally, including those teeth next to the site of the biopsy.

If you find that food catches around the stitches then the area can be gently rinsed with a mouthwash or warm salt water (dissolve a teaspoon of kitchen salt in a cup of warm water) commencing on the day after surgery.

## Will I need another appointment?

If another appointment is felt to be appropriate to come back to the clinic to discuss your results, this will usually be given to you on the day of the biopsy.

Since the stitches are dissolvable a review appointment is not always necessary, however, and the results could be discussed with your referring doctor or dentist.

## Contact details

If you are worried about your post-operative condition, please contact:

- Oral & Maxillofacial Unit 01274 365200 Monday to Friday 9:00am to 5:00pm
- Oral & Maxillofacial SHO on call via switchboard 01274 542200 – Monday to Friday 5.00pm to 9.00am and all weekend.
- You can contact us using the Relay UK app. Textphone users will need to dial 18001 ahead of the number to be contacted.

## Wristbands

When you are in hospital it is essential to wear a wristband at all times to ensure your safety during your stay.

The wristband will contain accurate details about you on it including all of the essential information that staff need to identify you correctly and give you the right care. All hospital patients including babies, children and older people should wear the wristband at all times.

If you do not have a wristband whilst in hospital, please ask a member of staff for one. If it comes off or is uncomfortable, ask a member of staff to replace it.

## Smoking

Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is a smoke-free organisation. You are not permitted to smoke or use e-cigarettes in any of the hospital buildings or grounds.

If you need this information in another format or language, please ask a member of staff to arrange this for you.

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