

# Dermatology Consultants at Newton-Wellesley, PC

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## SKIN BIOPSY CARE

### PUNCH BIOPSY WITH SUTURES

Keep dressing/band aid in place and dry for at least 24 hours.

After 24-48 hours, change the dressing. First, remove the bandage and cleanse the area gently with plain or soapy water. Pat dry. Apply a small amount of Vaseline petroleum jelly or Aquaphor (both available without prescription) along the line of stitches and cover with a band aid. Repeat this dressing change every 1-2 days until sutures are removed.

Sutures are normally removed after one or two weeks depending on the site.

### SHAVE BIOPSY AND SHAVE REMOVAL WITHOUT SUTURES

Shave biopsy and shave removal do not require sutures. They create a shallow abrasion or ulcer. Because no sutures are used, you may wet the site anytime after the procedure.

Change the dressing after 24 hours, or anytime it becomes wet. To do this, first, remove the bandage and cleanse the area gently with plain or soapy water. Pat dry. Apply a small amount of Vaseline petroleum jelly (or Aquaphor, both of which are available without prescription) and cover with a bandaid. Repeat this dressing change every 1-2 days until the surface has healed, that is, smooth and pink without oozing or residual scab. This typically requires 2 to 3 weeks, depending on the size and location.

### ALL BIOPSIES

Bleeding: Staining of the gauze is normal, especially within the first 24-48 hours. If the gauze becomes saturated with blood, remove the dressing and applying steady pressure with fresh gauze for 20 minutes. If the oozing does not stop after this maneuver, repeat for another 20 minutes. If still bleeding, please call the office, 617-969-0210. If the office is closed, the answering service will contact the covering physician.

Discomfort: You may have a small amount of tenderness or discomfort. Tylenol is the preferred painkiller after a biopsy because will not increase the risk of bleeding. Aspirin and ibuprofen/motrin/aleve can increase the risk of bleeding, especially in the first 24-48 hrs.

Infection: Signs of infection include increasing pain, redness, swelling, tenderness and pus. This usually develops approximately a week after the biopsy. If you think you may have an infection, please call the office, 617-969-0210.

Wound care: It is a myth that a biopsy will heal best if you “let the air get at it” to form a dry scab. It will heal more quickly and will be less itchy if an ointment such as Vaseline petroleum jelly or Aquaphor is used to keep it moist and greasy. Antibiotic ointments such as Bacitracin or Neosporin are not necessary as they may sometimes cause an allergic reaction.

Activity restrictions: Vigorous activity in the first day or two after a biopsy can occasionally cause the site to bleed, but for most biopsies there are no activity restrictions.

Suture removal and pathology results: If you are returning to the office for suture removal, we will review the pathology results with you at that time. If you are not returning to the office for suture removal, or if you would like your pathology report sooner, please call the office 3 to 5 days after the procedure, and the clinical assistant will be happy to speak with you regarding your report, which will have been reviewed by the doctor.