

# Punch Biopsy of a Skin Lesion

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This fact sheet is for general information about this procedure only. It is not intended to be used as medical advice or to replace advice that your relevant healthcare professional would give you. If you have a particular medical problem, please consult a healthcare professional.

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## What is a punch biopsy?

A punch biopsy involves removing a small piece of skin using a circular blade called a punch.

## What are the benefits of a punch biopsy?

Your doctor may be concerned about a skin lesion, which is a lump or spot on or just below your skin, or they may need to confirm the cause of a skin rash or eruption.

If a problem is found, the healthcare team will discuss the appropriate treatment with you. If the biopsy is normal, the healthcare team will reassure you.

## Are there any alternatives to a punch biopsy?

A blood test or scan may give more information and show that you have a problem. However, a biopsy will help to find out exactly what is causing the problem and will help your doctor to recommend the best treatment for you.

## What will happen if I decide not to have the operation or the operation is delayed?

Your doctor may not be able to confirm what the problem is or recommend the best treatment for you.

If you experience any of the following symptoms, contact your healthcare team.

- Increase in size.
- Bleeding.
- Itching.
- Darkening in colour.

## What does the procedure involve?

The procedure is performed under a local anaesthetic and usually takes 10 to 15 minutes.

Your doctor will stretch your skin to make it easier to use the punch to remove a sample of tissue. The amount of tissue removed is usually

less than 4 millimetres in diameter and about 1.5 millimetres deep.

They will either close the hole with stitches or use a dressing.

## What complications can happen?

- Bleeding
- Infection of the surgical site (wound)
- Allergic reaction to the equipment, materials or medication
- Wound breakdown

## Consequences of this procedure

- Pain
- Unsightly scarring of your skin

## How soon will I recover?

After a short while you will be able to go home.

You should be able to return to work the next day unless you are told otherwise.

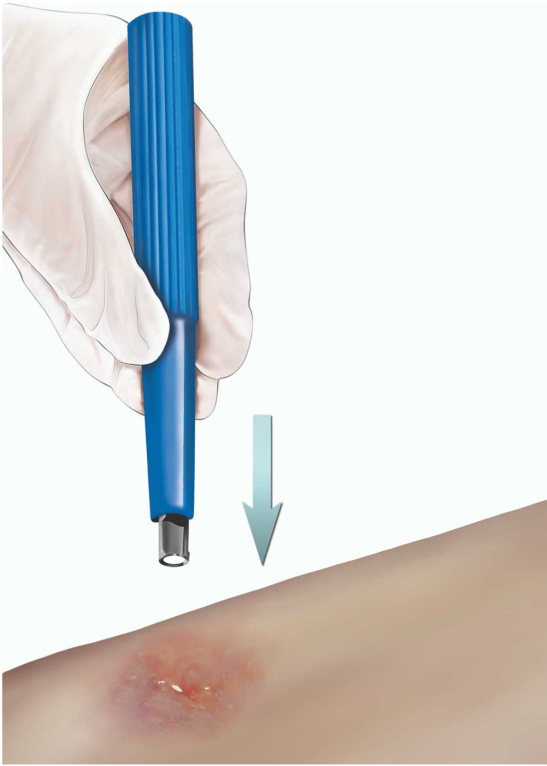
Do not have a hot bath for 2 to 3 days. Do not do strenuous exercise for the first week and not until the biopsy area has healed.

Results from the biopsy will not be available for at least a few days so the healthcare team may arrange for you to come back to the clinic for these results. The healthcare team will discuss with you any treatment or follow-up you need.

Regular exercise should improve your long-term health. Before you start exercising, ask the healthcare team or your GP for advice.

## Summary

A punch biopsy is usually a safe and effective way of finding out if there is a problem with your skin.



A punch biopsy

Keep this information document. Use it to help you if you need to talk to the healthcare team.

Some information, such as risk and complication statistics, is taken from global studies and/or databases. Please ask your surgeon or doctor for more information about the risks that are specific to you, and they may be able to tell you about any other suitable treatments options.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant healthcare team would give you.

## Acknowledgements

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