

**Patient
Information**

Advice for patients having a mouth or facial biopsy

Introduction

This leaflet gives you information about having a mouth or facial biopsy and answers some of the commonly asked questions. If you have any further questions, please contact the Oral and Maxillofacial department using the contact information at the end of this leaflet.

What is a mouth or facial biopsy?

A biopsy is the name for the procedure to remove a small piece of skin (tissue) on your face or a small piece of the lining of your mouth. The piece we remove is sent to our pathologists for examination under the microscope so that we can make a correct diagnosis. The tissue we are sampling is called the lesion. You will have been told during your visit whether we intend to remove the whole lesion or just a small piece of it.

Why do I need a biopsy?

Your dentist or doctor has sent you to see us for a second opinion, to try and find out what this lesion is and what treatment, if any, is needed. Many lesions in the mouth and face look similar, so it is important to know the exact nature of the lesion so that we can tailor treatment to your exact needs.

How long will the biopsy take?

The procedure usually takes about 20 minutes.

How will the procedure be carried out?

Usually, the procedure is carried out under local anaesthetic (a small injection in the mouth or face to numb the area) in our outpatient clinic. It may be necessary to carry out the procedure with you sedated or under a general anaesthetic (asleep) in the main hospital. If this is the case, this will have been discussed with you during your first visit.

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Department

**Oral
Maxillofacial**

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What should I expect after the biopsy?

Discomfort

You are likely to feel some discomfort but this is easily dealt with by taking regular pain relief such as ibuprofen or paracetamol.

Always read the label for directions, especially if you take other medicines or if you have been given prescription pain relief.

Swelling and bruising

Again, this is to be expected at the operation site but is usually mild. The swelling will probably be at its most noticeable 1 to 2 days after the operation.

Stitches

We usually use dissolvable stitches. If not, you will be given a letter on discharge from the clinic or ward with an appointment in our clinic to have the stitches removed. Alternatively, you may be asked to see the practice nurse at your GP's surgery to have the stitches removed. If so, a letter will be given to you to take to the nurse.

Will I be given instructions afterwards?

Following the procedure, you will be given information about aftercare.

Going home

If you have had a local anaesthetic, you will be able to return home straight after your appointment. If you have had a general anaesthetic or sedation, it is essential that someone takes you home and that there is a responsible adult to stay with you (and any children under 18 you may have) for 24 hours. For this period of time you should not:

- Drive a car, motorbike or ride a bicycle
- Drink alcohol
- Operate machinery or do anything requiring skill or judgement, including cooking
- Make important decisions or sign any documents

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When can I return to work?

You can usually return to work the same day if the procedure has been carried out under local anaesthetic. If you have had sedation or a general anaesthetic you will need a day or 2 off work.

Follow-up appointment

If a follow-up appointment is needed you will be able to make this before you leave the clinic. This appointment will be to check that everything is healing well and to let you know the result of the microscope test.

You may have been offered the option to receive your results by post. If so, you will have been given a letter with specific details before you leave the clinic.

Who to contact if you have concerns after the biopsy

For urgent concerns, please contact the **Oral and Maxillofacial Outpatient Department** via the hospital switchboard.

Gloucestershire Hospitals Switchboard

Tel: 0300 422 2222

When prompted, ask for the Operator, then ask to be put through to the 'On call Senior House Officer' for the Oral and Maxillofacial Department.

Alternatively, you can contact your GP (facial biopsy) or registered dentist (mouth biopsy) for advice.

In an emergency, please go to your nearest Emergency Department.

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Other useful contact information

New and follow-up clinic booking enquiries

Tel: 0300 422 6940

Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 4:30pm

Minor surgery (local anaesthetic with/without sedation) booking enquiries

Tel: 0300 422 3197

Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 4:30pm

Inpatient and Day Surgery Unit booking enquiries

Tel: 0300 422 8191

Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 4:30pm

Website

For further information, please visit the Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery webpage:

www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk/our-services/services-we-offer/oral-maxillofacial-surgery/

Feedback

We would welcome your feedback regarding your treatment. Please visit www.nhs.uk

Scroll to the bottom of the page and select the 'Contact us' link. On the next page, select 'Give feedback or make a complaint' then select the link below the heading 'Give feedback about an NHS service.'

Feedback can also be left on the Gloucestershire Hospitals twitter account: @gloshospitals

Making a choice

Shared Decision Making

If you are asked to make a choice, you may have lots of questions that you want to ask. You may also want to talk over your options with your family or friends. It can help to write a list of the questions you want answered and take it to your appointment.



Ask 3 Questions

To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions if you are asked to make a choice about your healthcare.

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?

These resources have been adapted with kind permission from the MAGIC Programme, supported by the Health Foundation

* Ask 3 Questions is based on Shepherd HL, et al. Three questions that patients can ask to improve the quality of information physicians give about treatment options: A cross-over trial. Patient Education and Counselling, 2011;24: 379-85



<https://aqua.nhs.uk/resources/shared-decision-making-case-studies/>