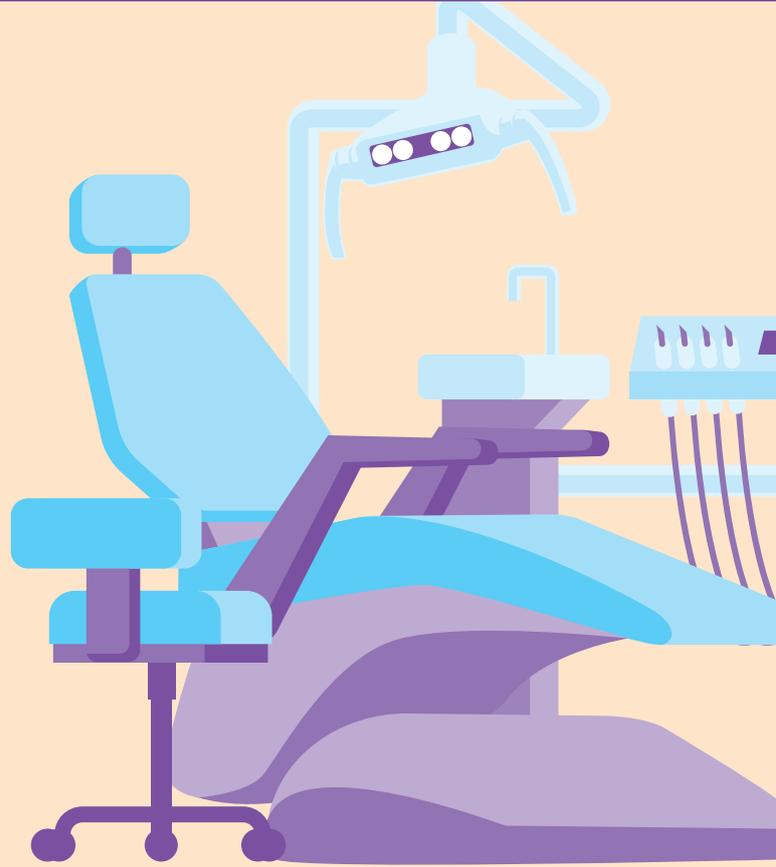


The purpose of this leaflet is to improve your understanding of the biopsy procedure and contains some answers to frequently asked questions. If you have any further questions or concerns after reading this leaflet, please ask a member of the surgical team looking after your care.



A biopsy is a simple operation where a small piece of tissue is removed from an area in your mouth, for example your tongue, lip, gum, or inside your cheek. This can then be looked at closely under a microscope.

There are two types of biopsy:

An **excisional biopsy** removes the whole lesion (abnormal area of tissue). This is usually carried out for small lumps or swellings. Further treatment may not be necessary.

An **incisional biopsy** involves removing only a small piece of the lesion. This is carried out to confirm what the abnormal tissue is. Then we can decide on the best treatment.

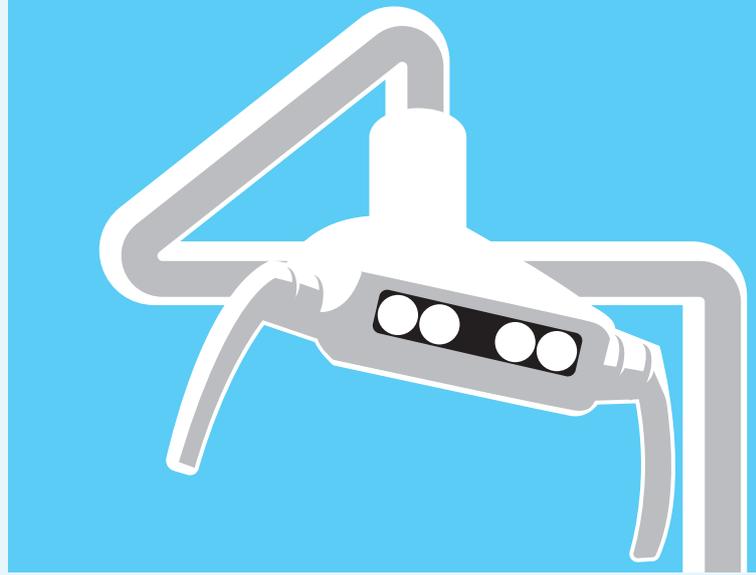
How is a biopsy carried out?

For most biopsies, a local anaesthetic (a numbing injection into the area) is used. The injection takes a couple of minutes to work. The biopsy should be painless and usually involves placement of a few stitches in the area afterwards. The stitches used are usually dissolvable and take around two weeks to disappear.

The whole process usually takes around 15 minutes from start to finish.

Is it painful afterwards?

The numbness wears off after a few hours. There may be some pain or swelling following the procedure and you may need to take simple painkillers such as paracetamol or ibuprofen. Any discomfort should only last a few days before beginning to resolve. Some biopsy sites may be more sore than others.



Will there be much bleeding?

There may be a little bleeding at the time of the biopsy, however, this usually stops very quickly. It is unlikely that the wound will bleed after the stitches are placed. Should the biopsy site bleed again when you get home, this can usually be stopped by applying firm and constant pressure over the area for at least 20 minutes.

How do I prepare for my appointment?

Have a normal meal before your appointment. Take your medications as usual unless advised otherwise by a clinician. If you are under 16 you must bring a parent or guardian with you.

What should I do after my appointment?

Be careful not to bite the area that has been numbed. It is generally advisable not to eat anything until the numbness has worn off, which is usually 2-3 hours after the injection. You can clean your teeth as normal, but don't spit the toothpaste out vigorously for the first 12 hours.

For 12 hours after the biopsy avoid:

- Rinsing out
- Very hot drinks
- Smoking
- Alcohol
- Hard foods
- Strenuous exercise

You may require some simple pain killers following the procedure. Pain usually resolves in a few days.

