



Instructions After Skin Biopsy

The dressing that was applied after the biopsy should stay in place for 24 hours. Keep the area dry until then. Follow the instructions below to take care of the wound. Most people do the first two steps in the shower. Do these steps once daily and continue for 2-3 weeks.

1. Wash your hands
2. Clean the wound with soap and water, then pat dry.
3. Apply a small amount of Vaseline to the area.
4. Cover with a band aid.

Skin heals best in warm, moist conditions. After applying a band aid daily to your skin it might become irritated, in that case, the wound can be left open without a bandage but be sure it remains moist with ointment (Vaseline). Reapply the ointment as needed to keep wound moist. You DO NOT want a scab to form. The best evidence to date suggests that plain Vaseline is the best ointment to use, many people are allergic to Neosporin and Polysporin and for this reason we recommend plain Vaseline. Buy a small tube at the pharmacy.

PAIN - Pain is related to swelling and should be minimal. For the first 1-2 days, if needed, you may apply an ice pack over the dressing for 15-20 minutes every 1-2 hours as needed and take Tylenol (unless allergic), two tablets every 4-6 hours as needed. Most people will not need anything for pain.

ACTIVITY – If no stitches were placed then there is no limitation on activity. Avoid soaking the wound in standing water. If you are a pool swimmer, take 3-4 days off. No lake swimming or hot tub use for 1 week. If stitches were placed you should decrease activity for the next 1-2 weeks until the stitch is removed. Increased activity increases your risk of bleeding and pain by increasing blood flow to the area. Avoid any activity that stretches or pulls at the biopsy site.

APPEARANCE – Biopsy sites rarely get infected. Healing biopsy sites develop a red rim around the edge – this is normal healing taking place. You may notice a yellowish material at the base of the wound – this is normal as well. If the wound becomes more red (silver dollar size), more painful, more warm and tender, or if it drains a creamy material, please call our office. If stitches were placed, after 1-2 weeks redness immediately around the stitches is normal and does not represent an infection. You may experience itching, tingling or numbness near the wound as it heals. The scar may remain pink for months but will contract and fade with time.

Bleeding risk is minimal for biopsies but might be greater if you are on a blood thinner. In the rare event that you experience bleeding, you should relax, recline and apply firm, steady pressure to the wound for 15 minutes without lifting. If bleeding continues, call our office.

Biopsy results: Within a week you will be called with your biopsy results. Occasionally more time is needed for processing. If you have not been called after 10 days, please call us during business hours.

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