

# Following your oral biopsy



## **How long will it take to heal?**

Depending on the biopsy site, the healing process can take between a few days to a few weeks.

## **How long will I be numb?**

You may be numb for up to four hours. During this time, take care not to bite or burn your lips and tongue.

## **Will I have any pain?**

You may experience some discomfort. Before the local anaesthetic has worn off, take painkillers to create a pain barrier. Take regularly for as long as required.

A combination of ibuprofen and paracetamol is advised. Take these alternately so that there is always a form of painkiller working at its maximum. Follow the dosage instructions on the packet. Only take this combination if they do not conflict with any medical conditions or allergies.

## **Will I have any swelling?**

Yes, it is normal to have swelling at the biopsy site and surrounding tissue. The maximum swelling will occur 48-72 hours after the operation, and will resolve in a few days.

## **How do I prevent and stop any bleeding?**

Avoid hot drinks, alcohol, rinsing your mouth and physical exertion for 24 hours following your surgery.

To stop any bleeding:

1. Find the bleeding point.
2. Dampen the gauze or towel in water.
3. Apply pressure directly on the bleeding point with a finger or bite firmly for **15 minutes**.

4. If the bleeding slows but is still present, repeat this process.
5. If after four attempts the bleeding hasn't slowed, call the Oral Surgery department (see end of leaflet).

## **How can I keep the biopsy site clean?**

The cleaner the site is kept, the quicker the healing process. If the biopsy site is **inside your mouth**:

- Use a warm salty mouth wash 24 hours after your surgery:
  - remove any obvious food debris present in the socket(s) after meals
  - dissolve 1 teaspoon of table salt into a glass of warm water
  - take a mouthful and gently bathe the socket(s) for 2 minutes, then spit out
  - repeat at 2 hourly intervals for 3-4 days and after every meal for 7-10 days.
- Brush your teeth – return to normal brushing after 24 hours.
- Do not smoke – it is recommended not to smoke for as long as possible following surgery, and for a minimum of 24 hours. If you smoke you increase the risk of complications.

If the biopsy site is **on your skin**:

- keep it as dry as possible
- apply chloramphenicol 1% cream four times per day, if prescribed by the surgeon.

Note: to minimise any scarring if there is a scab present, do not pick it but leave it to fall off naturally.

## **Do the stitches need to be taken out?**

Your surgeon will let you know whether you have dissolvable sutures (stitches). Any sutures inside the mouth and on the lips will usually dissolve in 5-10 days. Don't be alarmed if they dissolve sooner than this, as this is a good sign of healing.

Any sutures on the skin (blue in colour) will need to be removed by your GP in 7-10 days, unless otherwise instructed by the surgeon.

### **Are there any possible complications in the healing?**

Very rarely, the biopsy site can become infected. If you notice any white/yellow discharge with redness, swelling, or pain please contact the oral surgery department.

### **Contact us**

Oral surgery department (9am-5pm Monday to Friday): **01872 253980**

Outside of these hours please call:

**01872 250000** and ask for the on-call Max Fax SHO

If you would like this leaflet in large print, braille, audio version or in another language, please contact the General Office on 01872 252690

