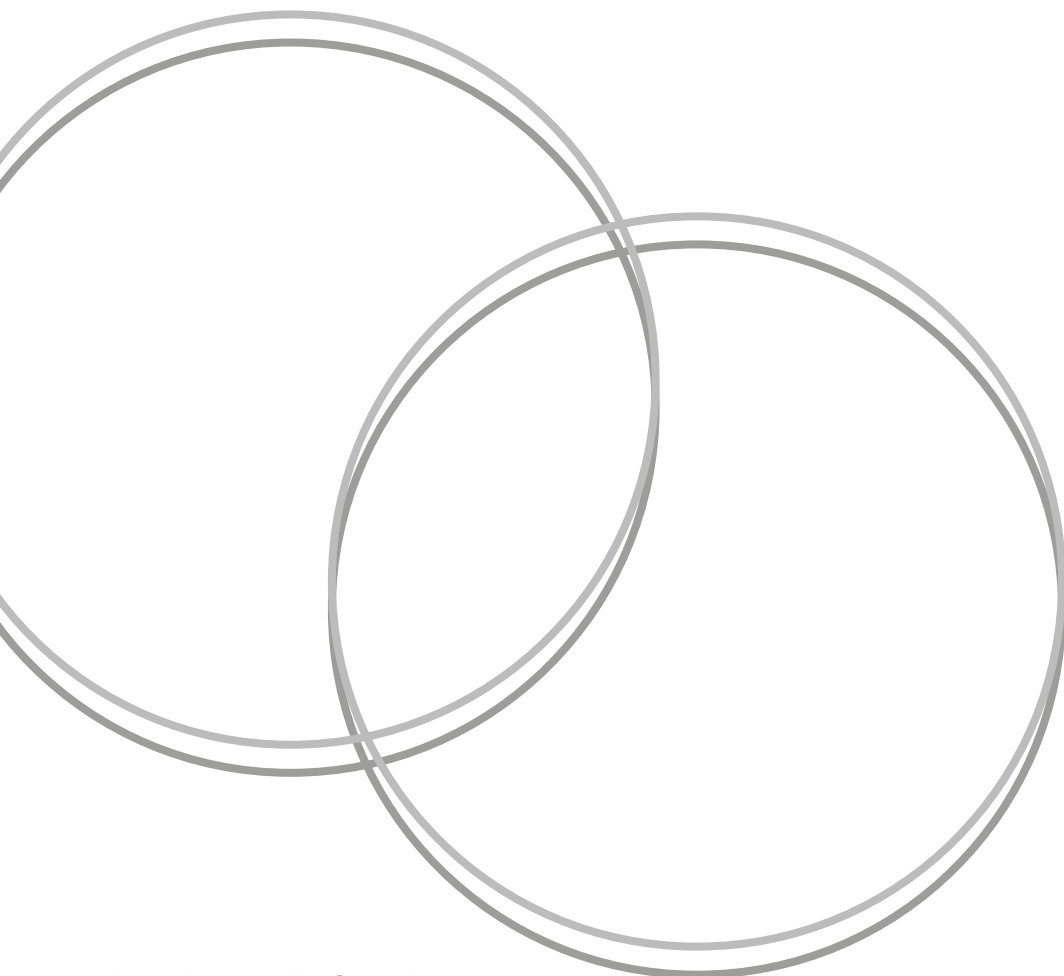


Oral (Mouth) Biopsy

Information for patients



This leaflet has been designed to improve your understanding of oral biopsies and contains answers to many of the commonly asked questions. If you have any other questions that the leaflet does not answer or would like further explanation, please do ask.

What is a biopsy?

A biopsy is a procedure where a small piece of tissue is removed from an area so that it can be looked at closely under a microscope.

The biopsy may aim to remove an area completely, this is called an excisional biopsy. This is usually only appropriate if the lump or swelling is small.

Sometimes only a small piece of an abnormal area is removed to confirm a diagnosis, this is called an incisional biopsy.

How is it done?

In most cases biopsies are carried out under local anaesthetic (an injection into the area to numb it). The injection takes a couple of minutes to work and means that the biopsy will be painless for you. The biopsy usually leaves a small hole that often requires suturing. In most cases the sutures used are dissolvable and take around two weeks to disappear, but do not worry if they come out sooner than this.

The whole process (local anaesthetic injection, biopsy and suturing) usually takes around 15 minutes from start to finish.

Is there much soreness or swelling afterwards?

After a few hours, when the local anaesthetic wears off, there may be some pain or swelling. This can be helped by taking simple painkillers (e.g., Paracetamol or Ibuprofen) before sensation fully returns to the area. Any discomfort usually only lasts a few days.

Will there be much bleeding?

Although there may be a little bleeding at the time of biopsy this usually stops very quickly and is unlikely to be a problem if the wound is stitched. Should the biopsy site bleed again when you get home this can usually be stopped by applying firm pressure over the area for at least 20 minutes with a rolled-up handkerchief or swab. If the bleeding does not stop, please contact the department.

When can I return to work?

This largely depends on your job and how you feel after the procedure. Most people are able to return to work later the same day.

Are there any things I should do when I get home?

On the day of surgery, you should avoid rinsing your mouth out vigorously as this may cause bleeding.

Also, please avoid smoking, vaping, and drinking alcohol, and avoid eating sticky, crispy or tough food.

Following the injection of local anaesthetic, your mouth may feel numb for a couple of hours. Be careful not to bite numb areas of your mouth or to burn yourself with hot food and drinks.

You should clean your teeth normally, including those teeth next to the site of the biopsy.

Starting on the day after surgery gently rinse the area with a warm saltwater mouthwash (dissolve a teaspoon of kitchen salt in a cup of warm water to make this). Repeat this 3 to 4 times a day, especially after meals and before bedtime for at least 7 days after the procedure.

Will I need another appointment?

A review appointment is not always necessary. You may receive the results in clinic, by telephone, or by letter. This will be discussed with you at your appointment.

Who should I contact if I have any questions or concerns?

The Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Outpatient Department can be contacted Monday to Friday between 8am and 5pm on **01865 743 112** or **01865 221 407**.

Out of these hours you can contact the Oxford University Hospitals Switchboard on **01865 741 166** and ask to speak to the on-call Oral and Maxillofacial team on **bleep 1049**.

Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

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