

After your skin biopsy

This leaflet explains how to take care of your wound(s) when you leave hospital. If you have any questions, please see our contact details on the next page.

Will I have any pain?

The local anaesthetic will begin to wear off about 30 to 40 minutes after the operation. If you experience any discomfort from your wound, you can take simple painkillers such as paracetamol to help with this.

Always follow the instructions on the packet and never take more than the recommended dose.

Check that the painkillers will not react with any other medicines you are taking. If you are unsure or if you have allergies to any medicines, speak to your pharmacist.

How should I look after my wound?

- Keep your dressing dry for the first 24 to 48 hours depending on the nurse's instructions.
- After 24 to 48 hours remove your dressing and **wash the wound with soap and water** (and use shampoo if on the scalp), either by washing in a shower or by splashing the treated area with warm soapy water. The dressing may be easier to remove if you wet it first. Flowing water will help to remove any scabs that may have formed.
- **Gently pat your wound dry.**
- **Apply a thin layer of clean Vaseline®** (or antibiotic ointment if it has been prescribed for you) directly over your stitches with your clean hands. This will help to keep your wound clean and moist and will prevent scabs from forming.
- **Apply a waterproof plaster (not fabric) directly over the wound.**

How long will my stitches (sutures) take to dissolve?

The time it takes for the dissolvable or absorbable stitches to disappear can vary. Most types should start to dissolve or fall out within a week or 2, although it may be up to a few weeks before they disappear completely.

If your wound has healed and your stitches are bothering you, you can make an appointment with your GP or practice nurse, who may be able to remove them, rather than waiting for them to dissolve completely.

Bruising

This is common, especially if the area of your biopsy was close to your eyes. To help the bruising heal, avoid taking aspirin, unless your GP has prescribed this.



Bleeding

It is unlikely that your wound will bleed, but if this happens, don't panic. Sit down and press firmly over the dressing for 15 minutes. If you are at all worried, please phone The Christie Hotline using the contact details in this leaflet. In the unlikely event you have uncontrollable bleeding, please contact your GP or go to your local A&E department.

Signs of infection: what to look out for

It is expected that your wound will be slightly red and tender to touch for the first couple of days after your surgery, but if the wound becomes very painful, very hot, very red and swollen, please contact your GP as soon as possible. These may be signs of infection and you may need antibiotics.

Smoking

Try to avoid smoking for the first week after your surgery. Smoking significantly delays wound healing. It increases the risk of infection and can contribute to a more prominent scar.

If you would like help with stopping smoking, a free, confidential smoking cessation and alcohol advice service is available for patients and carers at The Christie, providing helpful advice and treatment.

Phone: **0161 956 1215** or **07392 278408**

Will I have a follow-up appointment?

You will be given a follow-up appointment on the day of your biopsy only if necessary. This will vary from patient to patient.

Contacts

If you have any concerns or questions, please contact:

Name:

Phone:

If you need information in a different format, such as easy read, large print, BSL, braille, email, SMS text or other communication support, please tell your ward or clinic nurse.

The Christie is committed to producing high quality, evidence based information for patients. Our patient information adheres to the principles and quality statements of the Information Standard. If you would like to have details about the sources used please contact **the-christie.patient.information@nhs.net**

For information and advice visit the cancer information centres at Withington, Oldham, Salford or Macclesfield. Opening times can vary, please check before making a special journey.



Contact The Christie Hotline for
urgent support and specialist advice
The Christie Hotline: 0161 446 3658
Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week