

Oral Biopsy

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This fact sheet is for general information about this procedure only. It is not intended to be used as medical advice or to replace advice that your relevant healthcare professional would give you. If you have a particular medical problem, please consult a healthcare professional.

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What is an oral biopsy?

An oral biopsy involves removing small pieces of tissue from the inside of the mouth.

What are the benefits?

Your surgeon is concerned that an area in your mouth may look abnormal (such as a white patch) or may be causing you problems (such as a lump, ulcer or painful area). An oral biopsy is a good way of finding out if there is a problem.

The tissue that your surgeon removes will be examined under a microscope to help make the diagnosis or help your surgeon recommend the best treatment for you.

If the biopsy is normal, your surgeon will reassure you.

Are there any alternatives?

Other investigations such as blood tests may show that you have a problem but a biopsy can help to find out exactly what is causing the problem.

What will happen if I decide not to have the procedure?

Your surgeon may not be able to confirm what the problem is.

What does the procedure involve?

The procedure is usually performed using a local anaesthetic injected into your mouth.

An oral biopsy usually takes about 15 minutes.

Your surgeon will remove the tissue using a small blade. They will usually close the wound with dissolvable stitches.

What complications can happen?

The healthcare team are trained to reduce the risk of complications.

Possible complications of this procedure are shown below.

Any risk rates given are taken from studies of people who have had this procedure. Your doctor may be able to tell you if the risk of a complication is higher or lower for you. Some

risks are higher if you are older, obese, have other health problems or you smoke. Health problems include diabetes, heart disease or lung disease.

Complications of an oral biopsy

- Bleeding after the procedure.
- Infection.
- Allergic reaction to the equipment, materials or medication.

Consequences of this procedure

- Pain.
- Swelling around the biopsy site.

What happens after the procedure?

You should be able to go home straight after the procedure.

You will usually recover feeling in your mouth after a few hours. Depending on your job, you should be able to go back to work later the same day.

Before you go home the healthcare team will explain to you how to care for your wound.

The healthcare team will tell you when you need to come back to the clinic. Your surgeon will tell you the results, check your wound, and discuss with you any treatment or follow-up care you may need.

Summary

An oral biopsy is usually a safe and effective way of finding out if there is a problem in your mouth.

Keep this information document. Use it to help you if you need to talk to the healthcare team.

Some information, such as risk and complication statistics, is taken from global studies and/or databases. Please ask your surgeon or doctor for more information about the risks that are specific to you, and they may be able to tell you about any other suitable treatments options.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant healthcare team would give you.

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