

Genital Skin Biopsy

Information for patients



You have been referred for review of your genital skin and possibly a small skin biopsy. This is because we want to make an accurate diagnosis, to make sure we give you the right treatment.

Arriving for the procedure

Please come to the reception at the Sexual Health Department, in the Churchill Hospital. Please tell the doctor if:

- you are taking warfarin, aspirin, clopidogrel, dipyridamole or any other medicines that thin your blood
- you have any allergies.

What happens during the procedure?

You will need to undress from the waist down and will be given a paper sheet to cover yourself. We will numb the area of skin where we are going to take the biopsy, using a small injection of local anaesthetic, so that the procedure does not hurt. This may sting briefly, but will soon go numb. We will then take a small (4mm) biopsy (sample of skin).

The area where the biopsy is taken will bleed a little afterwards. We can stop this by using a chemical called silver nitrate. If there is more bleeding than usual, we occasionally use a small dissolvable stitch to close the wound, or apply heat to the area using a special machine called a 'Hyfrecator', but this is unlikely to happen.

The whole procedure should not take more than 20 minutes.

After the procedure

The local anaesthetic will wear off in about 1-2 hours. If you feel any pain or discomfort we recommend you take paracetamol or ibuprofen, if you are able to.

If silver nitrate was used to stop any bleeding, the area may look black. This is caused by a chemical reaction with the skin. The blackness will not wash off, but will gradually come away by itself over the next few days.

If we have used a stitch, this should dissolve within a week. If this does not happen, please contact us or your GP practice nurse, so that it can be removed.

It is advisable not to bathe, shower or wash the area until the next day. You should also avoid strenuous activity or exercise until the next day, as this may make it bleed. If you do start to bleed or notice blood, apply firm continuous pressure to the area for 20 minutes. If it does not stop, please contact us on the number below or call your out of hours GP or NHS 111.

During and after the procedure we take every precaution to prevent your wound from becoming infected. Despite this, infection occasionally does occur. Symptoms of infection include increased pain, redness, swelling and discharge from the biopsy site. If you develop any of these symptoms, please contact us and we will arrange for you to be seen. If you do have an infection you may need a course of antibiotics to treat it.

How to contact us

If you have any questions or concerns please contact the Sexual Health Department for advice.

Tel: **01865 234 454**

(9.00am to 5.00pm, Monday to Thursday and Friday 9.00am to 3.30pm)

Outside of these hours please contact your out of hours GP or call **111**, the NHS non-emergency number.

For clinical use only:

To be filled out at procedure:

Date of biopsy:

Type of biopsy:

Clinician:

If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter, a document in Easy Read, another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221 473** or email **PALSJR@ouh.nhs.uk**

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