



DR KWAN ZHENLI

CONSULTANT DERMATOLOGIST AND MOHS
SURGEON

AFTER YOUR SKIN BIOPSY

Painkillers for any pain or discomfort

The local anaesthetic will start to wear off about 1-2 hours after your skin biopsy procedure. If you have any discomfort from your wound, take simple painkillers like paracetamol to help with this. Please follow the instructions given and do not take more than the recommended amount (dose).

If you are unsure whether the painkillers will react with any of your other medications or you have allergies to any medicines, speak to your pharmacist or doctor.

How to look after your wound

Keep the dressing dry for the first 24 to 48 hours, depending on the nurse's instructions. After this time, remove the dressing and wash the wound with soap and water (shampoo if on the scalp). Wash in a shower or by splashing the treated area with warm soapy water. The dressing might be easier to remove if you wet it first. Flowing water will help to remove any scabs that have formed. Gently pat your wound dry. Do not rub it.

Apply a very thin layer of clean chloramphenicol ointment directly over your wound or stitches with clean hands as instructed. Use a cotton bud if needed. This will help to keep the area clean and moist and will prevent scabs from forming. Apply a waterproof (not fabric) plaster directly over the wound.

Repeat this routine twice daily until the stitches are removed. If there are no stitches change the dressing twice daily until the wound has completely healed over.

Dissolvable stitches

Continue to check every day until the stitches are dissolved. This can take 7 to 21 days. There is usually no cause for concern but if you have any discomfort, you may consult your dermatologist, your general practitioner or a nurse to look at the wound and remove the stitches.

The information provided in this document is intended as an resource only and should not be used as a substitute for professional diagnosis and treatment. Please consult your health care provider before making any health care decisions or for guidance about a specific medical condition.



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Non-dissolvable stitches

These will normally be removed between 5 and 14 days after surgery by a nurse or general practitioner, depending on the surgical site. Please make sure you arrange an appointment for removal of stitches using the letter or form provided.

Side effects

It is expected that your wound will be slightly red and tender to touch for the first couple of days after surgery.

Infection

Contact your dermatologist or general practitioner if:

- the wound becomes very painful
- the wound is hot to touch
- the area is red and swollen

You might need antibiotics for an infection.

Bruising

This is common, especially if the area of your biopsy was close to your eyes. Bruising can last up to 2 weeks.

To help reduce bruising and swelling, you can apply a cold compress over the dressing. Use an ice pack (or a pack of frozen vegetables) and apply to the biopsy site for 10 to 15 minutes, several times during the first 24 to 48 hours. Never apply an ice pack directly to your skin. Always wrap in a clean towel first.

Bleeding

It is unlikely that your wound will bleed. If this happens, do not panic. Sit down and apply steady pressure by pressing firmly over the dressing for 20-30 minutes. If the bleeding is not controlled after this time, go straight to the Emergency Department.

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Smoking

Try to avoid smoking for the first 2 weeks after your surgery. Smoking significantly delays wound healing, increases the risk of infection and can cause a more prominent scar.

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