

If you experience persistent bleeding or an increase in swelling or pain please contact

The Eastman Dental Hospital on:

Telephone: 020 3456 7899
Opening times: 09:00 and 17:00
Monday to Friday

Address: 256 Gray's Inn Road
London WC1X 8LD

Website: www.uclh.nhs.uk

Outside of the above hours please call:

UCLH

Telephone 0845 155 5000
or 020 345 67890

Ask for the on call doctor for Oral and Maxillofacial surgery or alternatively contact your local Accident & Emergency (A&E) department.

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this document, please contact us on 020 3456 1113. We will try our best to meet your needs.

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Eastman Dental Hospital

Oral mucosal biopsy

Dental Medicine and Oral Surgery



What is a mucosal biopsy and why do I need it?

The clinician looking after you has identified an area in your mouth which needs further tests. A biopsy is necessary to assist the clinician in making the correct diagnosis and therefore allow appropriate treatment to be started. A biopsy is the removal of a small piece of the lining mucosa of the mouth for examination under a microscope. It is looked at by a pathologist who specialises in diseases of the head and neck.

What will happen?

The area will be made numb with a local anaesthetic injection, like that used before a tooth is filled.

The biopsy can then be carried out without causing pain, although you may feel some pulling of the tissues. This usually takes ten minutes.

In the majority of cases stitches are required to close the wound and aid healing. These usually dissolve and do not need to be removed.

If you have had a biopsy of the gums or roof of the mouth the biopsy site may be covered with a plastic pack which will fall out in the first few days after the procedure. Alternatively, a chemical called silver nitrate may be applied carefully to the area to stop bleeding.

You should receive both verbal and written instructions on how to care for the mouth following the biopsy.

A review appointment will be made for two to three weeks after your biopsy to discuss the result and start treatment. The result will be sent to your doctor and dentist and copied to you by letter.

Care of your mouth after your biopsy

- Avoid rinsing your mouth or cleaning your teeth for 24 hours following your biopsy. This may dislodge the blood clot causing the biopsy site to bleed again and be uncomfortable.
- The local anaesthetic should wear off after about two hours. During the two hours do not consume hot drinks, which may burn your mouth. Be careful not to bite your lip or tongue when eating .
- It is important to keep your mouth clean to encourage healing. The following day you may clean your teeth and start to use a warm, salt-water mouthwash. Dissolve a teaspoon of ordinary salt in a cup of warm water. Use four times a day after eating and continue with these rinses for a minimum of three days.

- If further bleeding occurs gently rinse out the clots with warm water and bite down/ press with a finger on a piece of folded gauze or a clean tissue for at least 20 minutes.
- Over the counter pain relief (ibuprofen 400mg four times daily or paracetamol 1g four times daily) may be taken as required. **Do not exceed the recommended dose** and check you are not allergic to the medicine before taking it.
- Some people experience discomfort for a few days after the biopsy when opening the mouth. Therefore a soft diet (such as soups, mashed potato, scrambled egg, custard and mashed banana) may be needed.
- **Try not to smoke** for at least 24 hours following your biopsy as this may delay healing.
- Avoid strenuous exercise for 24 hours following the biopsy.