



Information for  
patients and  
carers

## Vulval Biopsy

## What is a biopsy?

A biopsy is a procedure to collect a sample of tissue for analysis. This tissue will be looked at under a microscope to help make a diagnosis and guide treatment of a condition.

## On the day of a vulval biopsy

Please take all your normal medication (unless advised not to) and eat and drink as normal. You may want to take pain relief such as paracetamol or ibuprofen (depending on your allergies) before your clinic appointment.

The biopsy will take approximately 20 minutes to perform. It is important to let your doctor know if you have:

1. An allergy to local anaesthetic
2. Taken medications that may make you bleed more such as aspirin, warfarin or clopidogrel
3. Blood borne infections such as Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C or HIV

## What happens during the biopsy?

Your doctor will discuss the procedure with you and obtain your consent.

You will then be examined and local anaesthetic will be injected into the skin. This will make the area, for biopsy, numb.

A small circular instrument is used to take a piece of skin that is between 3mm – 5mm across. This may be repeated if there are several areas or larger areas to be investigated.

The biopsy sites may then be closed with a stitch or treated with silver nitrate. The silver nitrate may leave a grey/black residue in your underwear or on your skin.

## After the biopsy

You can go home immediately.

### **Vulval Care**

Please allow 24 hours from the biopsy before bathing or washing the area.

If a stitch has been used this should dissolve within two weeks. If this has not happened please contact the practice nurse at your GP surgery. We advise you not to have intercourse, go swimming or undertake strenuous exercise until the stitch has dissolved and the area has healed.

### **Pain**

The local anaesthetic will wear off 1-2 hours after insertion. If you begin to feel pain or discomfort we recommend that you take your usual over the counter pain relief. Please follow the dosage on the packet.

The biopsy site may sting on passing urine which is an expected reaction. To make this more comfortable you could pour a small glass of tepid water over the area after passing urine.

### **Bleeding**

A small amount of spotting is expected. If you are concerned apply pressure to the area for 15-20mins and the bleeding should stop. If the bleeding is heavy or you are concerned please contact us on the number below.

### **Infection**

Despite our precautions to avoid infection some wound infections may still occur. If you notice increased pain, swelling, redness or discharge from or at the biopsy site please see your GP or contact us on the number below.

## Your results

Once your results are available your gynaecologist will contact you by letter or phone. They will be able to advise you on your care plan following the result.

## Are there any risks?

Complications after a skin biopsy are rare. Very occasionally, despite our precautions, an infection can develop and your GP can provide antibiotics.

## Contact details

If you have any more questions please discuss these with the doctor or nurse looking after you.

Should you require urgent advice following your biopsy please contact the gynaecology assessment unit (GAU): 01772 524415

## Sources of further information

[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk)

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

[www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk)

[www.accessable.co.uk](http://www.accessable.co.uk)

[www.rcog.org.uk/globalassets/documents/patients/patient-information-leaflets/gynaecology/skin-conditions-of-the-vulva.pdf](http://www.rcog.org.uk/globalassets/documents/patients/patient-information-leaflets/gynaecology/skin-conditions-of-the-vulva.pdf)

All our patient information leaflets are available on our website for patients to access and download:

[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets)

**Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is not responsible for the content of external internet sites.**

Lancashire Teaching Hospitals is a smoke-free site.

On 31 May 2017 Lancashire Teaching Hospitals became a smoke-free organisation. From that date smoking is not permitted anywhere on any of our premises, either inside or outside the buildings. Our staff will ask you about your smoking status when you come to hospital and will offer you support and advice about stopping smoking including Nicotine Replacement Therapy to help manage your symptoms of withdrawal.

If you want to stop smoking you can also contact the Quit Squad Freephone 0800 328 6297.

Please ask if you would like help in understanding this information. This information can be made available in large print and in other languages.

**Cantonese:**

如果你希望以另外一種格式接收該資訊，請和我們聯絡，不必猶豫。

**Gujarati:**

જો તમને આ માહિતી બીજી રચના કે ફોર્મેટમાં મેળવવાની ઇચ્છા હોય, તો કૃપા કરી અમારો સંપર્ક કરતા અચકાશો નહિ.

**Hungarian:**

Kérjük, vegye fel velünk a kapcsolatot, ha más formában kéri ezt az információt.

**Polish:**

Jeżeli chciał(a)by Pan/Pani otrzymać niniejsze informacje w innym formacie, prosimy o kontakt.

**Punjabi:**

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਫਾਰਮੈਟ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਨਾ ਝਿਜਕੋ।

**Urdu:**

اگر آپ اس معلومات کو کسی اور صورت میں حاصل کرنا چاہتے ہیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کرنے میں ہچکچاہٹ محسوس نہ کریں۔

**Department:** Gynaecology

**Division:** Women and Children

**Production date:** December 2020

**Review date:** December 2023

**JR585 v1**