

## Punch Biopsy

### What is a punch biopsy?

A punch biopsy is a very common investigation used in dermatology to take a sample of skin for analysis. A circular coring device is used, like a mini-apple corer, to remove a cylinder of skin. Usually the skin is closed with a suture to leave a 4mm straight line.

### What it used for?

Biopsies are used to diagnose difficult rashes and confirm skin cancers.

### Does it hurt?

A punch biopsy is carried out under a local anaesthetic, an injection into the skin that numbs the area. You may have had local anaesthetic before a dental procedure. The anaesthetic stings for 10-20 seconds and then you should feel no pain. If you have ever experience problems before with local anaesthetic please inform the doctor.

### Does it leave a scar?

Yes. All surgical procedures will leave a mark in the skin. This is usually slightly pink 4mm line to start with and will fade to leave a white line. Rarely a thickened scar (keloid) may form. If you have had problems with scars before please inform the doctor.

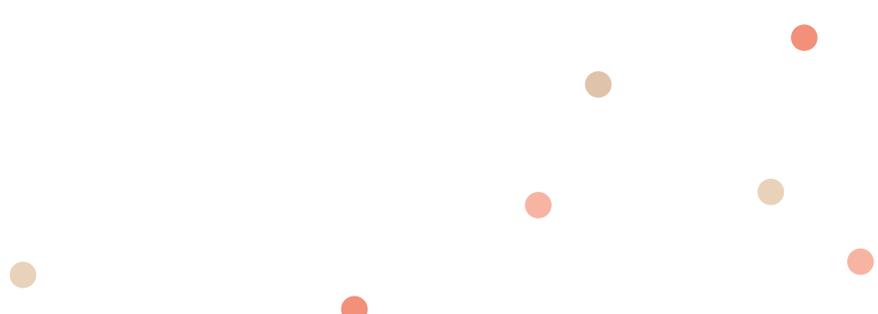
### Do I need to do anything after the procedure?

The anaesthetic will last a couple of hours. There may be pain after this and taking paracetamol before the anaesthetic wears off, and regularly for the first day, may help. A dressing is normally used to cover the wound and it is best for this to stay in place until suture removal.

If you have a suture this will need removing 7-10 days after the procedure. This can either be arranged with the nurses at the private hospital or with your local practice nurse, but this will need to be booked with your general practice.

### How long does it take for results to come back?

Results take 1 week for routine biopsies. If special stains are required this may take a further week. Biopsies for the investigation of hair conditions take 4-6 weeks.





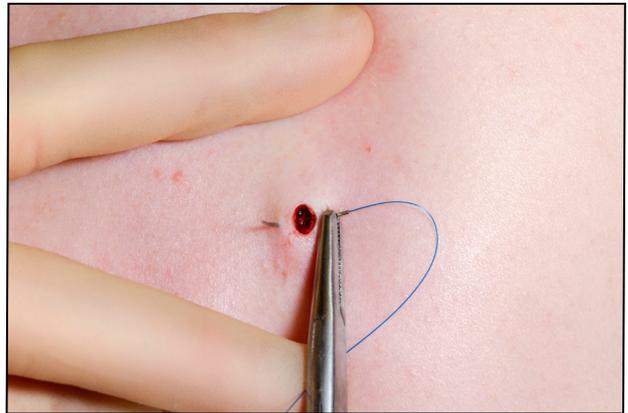
Local anaesthetic is injected into the surrounding area, numbing the skin.



Using a small coring device, known as a punch biopsy, a cylinder of skin can be removed.



A sample of a rash or lesion can be removed for testing.



A suture (stitch) is inserted to close the hole.



A small linear wound is created that will usually heal within a week, at which point the suture is removed.

