If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask a member of the nursing or medical staff, or call the Dermatology/Skin Cancer Specialist Nurse:

**Mihaela Savu**  
Tel: 01935 384906  
Mobile: 07990 776684  
or email: mihaela.savu@ydh.nhs.uk

**Plastics Secretary**  
Tel: 01935 384887

**Dermatology Secretary**  
Tel: 01935 384871

We would like to thank the Royal Devon & Exeter NHS Foundation trust for allowing us to use the information given in this leaflet.

**Care of your wound following Diagnostic Punch Biopsy of the skin**

**Dermatology & Plastic Surgery**

www.yeovilhospital.nhs.uk
Relief of pain

The local anaesthetic that you have had will wear off the next 1 to 2 hours. You may need to take simple pain relief, e.g. paracetamol (as directed on the manufacturer’s packet) to cover the next 12 to 24 hours. Aspirin should be avoided as it increases your risk of post-operative bleeding. Check with your GP if you have been prescribed other analgesia.

Bleeding

The biopsy (sample site) will be checked for bleeding before you leave the department. If bleeding occurs at home, do not disturb the dressing. Apply a pad to the area. Do not lift the pad from the wound for a full 10 minutes. If possible, elevate or raise the area, e.g. arm or leg. If bleeding persists you will need to visit your practice nurse or local Emergency Department for assessment. A clean dressing will be provided once bleeding has settled if this is necessary.

Be extra vigilant for bleeding if you take anticoagulants, e.g. aspirin or warfarin.

You will have been given a ‘practice nurse letter’, please remember to take this with you when you see the practice nurse.

Stitches

Stitches or sutures will normally be removed (after 5 to 14 days) at your own surgery by the practice nurse. Occasionally punch biopsies do not need stitches.

The wound is then left to heal naturally.

You will need to book an appointment with the practice nurse well in advance of needing stitches removed or dressings renewed.

If you are concerned about discomfort when the stitches are removed, consider taking a simple pain relief, e.g. paracetamol, an hour before your appointment.

Activity

You should try and rest as much as much as possible for the remainder of today. Remember you have had a small operation. Sport is best avoided for the next 3 days and up to one week if your skin sample has come from a place located over ‘active’ muscles, especially the legs or shoulders. Stretched stitches may mean the wound will not hold together to heal properly or may leave a bumpy scar.

Bathing

The area should be kept covered for the next 3 days. Ideally, the wound should be covered until the stitch comes out. If bathing, never leave a wet dressing in place. Wash your hands and change it for a plain plaster. A wet dressing increases your risk of infection.

The pathology result

This is normally available 2 weeks after the sample has been taken. The dermatology specialist will write to your GP explaining the result and any further treatment or action needed. We will send you a copy of the letter.

Complications

The signs of infection can be any of the following:

- Increasing pain at the site
- Swelling
- Redness
- A pus-like discharge

If you are concerned about any of the above, see your practice nurse promptly, taking with you your ‘practice nurse letter’. Your practice nurse is the first point of contact. The practice nurse will be able to assess your wound if you suspect it is infected.

If you experience persistent pain after 48 hours you may need advice from your GP.

Feedback

Comments and suggestions that give us feedback on our practice, e.g. delays in wound healing, pain or dressing problems, (and the good things as well) are helpful. Please contact the Dermatology Specialist Nurse using the phone numbers or email address given on the back of this leaflet.