

Patient Information - Pre-operative advice for children due to have skin surgery under local anaesthetic

Department of Dermatology

Introduction

The doctor or the nurse will have explained to you and your child that a small operation is required to remove a skin lesion or to obtain a sample of skin to help provide you with a complete diagnosis. This leaflet is intended to provide you with information regarding this procedure and to help answer questions you or your family may have. After the operation you will receive another leaflet to explain how to look after the wound site and when to get the stitches removed.

Before arriving for the appointment

An appointment for the operation will be arranged with you by our booking team.

You may be asked to apply an anaesthetic cream at home to the area to be operated on, one to two hours before your child's appointment time. This will need to be covered with a clear adhesive dressing which will be provided. For young children, cover the adhesive dressing with clothing to prevent them from trying to remove it.

Your child can eat and drink as normal beforehand.

What happens next?

On arrival to the department, please report to the reception desk where you will be asked to check that the details held for your child are correct. You will then be asked to wait in the waiting room.

A nurse will take you to a consultation room, where the doctor will discuss the procedure and answer any questions you both may have. You will then be asked to sign the consent form on behalf of your child. If your child is on any medications or is allergic to any medication, please inform the doctor. You will be able to stay with your child throughout the procedure.

What does the skin biopsy/skin lesion procedure involve?

Skin biopsies/lesion removals are usually done while your child is fully awake with a small area of skin being numbed first. The anaesthetic cream and dressings you may have applied at home are removed and the area cleaned with normal saline. Local anaesthetic is injected where a slight burning or warm feeling may be felt. Once the area is numb, the skin biopsy needle or scalpel will be gently inserted and the skin will be removed. This is usually only felt as a touch sensation and takes only a few minutes.

The biopsy site may bleed slightly after the procedure and is held closed either by a stitch, which may need to be removed after a few days, or by paper stitches. A dressing will be placed over the area. The skin that was removed is sent to the laboratories for testing.

You will be given an information sheet on how to look after the area and the dressing, and your child can then go home. A scar will form in this area.

What type of procedure is my child having?

The type of procedure will be discussed with you and your child in clinic; details of the procedures are given below:

Punch Skin Biopsy (takes approximately 30 minutes)

A punch skin biopsy is usually performed to determine or confirm a diagnosis that cannot be made by blood tests. It is a procedure to remove a small piece of skin tissue for examination under the microscope. It will be explained to you before the biopsy what type of testing is required.

Excision of a skin lesion (takes approximately 40 minutes)

The procedure is similar to that described above but the whole lesion is removed with a margin of normal skin around the edge. The bleeding is stopped with several stitches below and above the skin surface, in some cases electric cautery machines are used to stop the bleeding. The scar will be longer than the lesion removed.

After the surgery

The biopsy site may feel uncomfortable for one to two days, especially if it is knocked, and Calpol (paracetamol) may be given. Your child can return to school or nursery the day after the biopsy.

You should keep your child's wound dressing dry for at least 48 hours. Any stitches will require removal by your GP practice nurse. At the time of the operation you will be advised when to get these stitches removed. Your child should avoid activities, such as sport, for at least 14 days.

How long will it take to get the test results?

The test results will be available in approximately six weeks.

Does the operation carry any risk?

Bleeding

It is normal for a small amount of blood to come through the dressing. Any heavier bleeding should stop by applying firm pressure over the dressing for 20 minutes. If the bleeding continues you should contact your GP or call **NHS 111** for advice.

Infection

Occasionally a wound can become infected, which would present with increased pain, swelling and redness of the wound site after a few days. If you are concerned that your wound has become infected, contact your GP or the Dermatology Department for advice.

Scarring

Your child will be left with a permanent scar, the length and width will depend on the operation performed. The scar is likely to be red initially, but this fades over a period of weeks.

Distraction suggestions for during the procedure

Your child may wish to bring something with them to distract them during the procedure, such as a handheld computer game, books, music or story CD or a toy.

Breath control can be done by pretending to blow a feather up into the air, blowing up a real or imagined balloon or by blowing bubbles. Older children may just concentrate on their breathing.

Contact details

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