

# Excisional Biopsy

## What is an excisional biopsy?

An excisional biopsy is a procedure to completely remove a lump or abnormal area from your skin or other part of your body. The tissue is sent to a lab to check for cancer or other disease. If it is cancer, lab tests may be able to tell how quickly the cancer may grow and what treatments may work best.

## When is it used?

The biopsy is done to look for cancer, infection, and inflammation. It is most often used to diagnose skin changes or to confirm a diagnosis. In some cases it may also be done to treat a problem, such as removal of a small skin cancer.

## How do I prepare for this procedure?

- Plan for your care. Depending on what type of biopsy you have, you may need to find someone to give you a ride home after the procedure.
- You may or may not need to take your regular medicines the day of the procedure, depending on what they are and when you need to take them. Some medicines (like aspirin or blood thinners such as Coumadin) may increase your risk of bleeding during or after the procedure. Tell your healthcare provider about all medicines and supplements that you take. Ask your healthcare provider if you need to avoid taking any medicine or supplements before the procedure.
- Follow any other instructions your healthcare provider gives you.
- Ask any questions you have before the procedure. You should understand what your healthcare provider is going to do and what you should expect during recovery. You have the right to make decisions about your healthcare and to give permission for tests or procedures.

## What happens during this procedure?

The biopsy may be done at your provider's office, an outpatient surgery center, or the hospital.

You will be given a local anesthetic. Local anesthesia numbs the area where the tissue will be removed. You may also be given a sedative to help you relax but you may be awake during the procedure.

Your healthcare provider will make a cut in the skin and remove the abnormal tissue. Your provider may need to close the cut with stitches. The tissue is sent to the lab for tests. A small bandage may be put over the area.

## **What happens after this procedure?**

You may be able to go home right away, or you may need to stay in the surgery center or hospital for an hour or so after the procedure.

Ask your healthcare provider:

- How and when you will hear your test results
- How long it will take to recover
- What activities you should avoid and when you can return to your normal activities
- How to take care of yourself at home
- What symptoms or problems you should watch for and what to do if you have them

Make sure you know when you should come back for a checkup.

## **What are the risks of this procedure?**

Your healthcare provider will explain the procedure and any risks. Some possible risks include:

- Anesthesia has some risks. Discuss these risks with your healthcare provider.
- You may have infection, bleeding, or blood clots.

There is risk with every treatment or procedure. Ask your healthcare provider how these risks apply to you.

Developed by RelayHealth.

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