

Patient Information Following Vulval Biopsy

You have had a biopsy taken from the vulva. This is a small piece of tissue sent to the laboratory to look for a diagnosis for your condition.

AFTER THE BIOPSY

The biopsy, usually only a few millimetres, leaves a wound that needs to be sealed by either

1. **Stitches** – these are usually dissolvable and do not need to be removed. They usually dissolve over the next 2-3 weeks, or
2. **Monse's Paste/Silver Nitrate** – This seals the area. You may have a brown/silvery black discharge from the biopsy site and there may be a burning feeling.

Dressings - You may or may not have a small gauze dressing. This may fall off when passing urine but it does not matter. If it is still present the following morning, it can be removed.

Local Anaesthetic – this will have been used to numb the area from where the biopsy has been taken. This will wear off in an hour or two. The biopsy site will then feel sore so we recommend that you take a pain killer such as **Paracetamol** or **Ibuprofen** according to the instructions on the pack (if you are able to tolerate this) for the next 2-3 days.

Driving - The procedure does not affect your ability to drive afterwards. If you are worried then you may arrange for someone to take you home. It is a good idea to rest for a couple of hours after the biopsy to minimise the chances of bleeding from the wound. We would advise that you avoid heavy work or prolonged standing for the rest of the day.

Washing – Avoid baths/showers on the day of the biopsy. Once you have had a bath/shower, pat dry with a clean towel. Never rub. If using a bath, please limit the amount of time spent in a bath (avoid a long soak) until the wound is fully healed. Wash with water only. Keep the wound dry until fully healed.

Passing Urine – You should not experience any issues passing urine other than occasional stinging. On the day of the biopsy do not use toilet paper. When you have opened your bowels please make sure that you wipe the skin from front to back to keep the biopsy site as clean as possible

Getting back to normal - It will take a few days for the skin to heal and you will find that the area may be tender.
You may find that loose clothes are more comfortable for a couple of days.

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Vigorous exercise - such as running, cycling, horse riding etc. should be avoided for a few days after the biopsy as the area is likely to be uncomfortable and the biopsy site will be fragile.

You can resume sexual intercourse after the stitches have fully dissolved and if the area is fully comfortable.

If you swim regularly you can start swimming again after the stitches have dissolved and after the biopsy site has fully healed.

Risks

There are some small risks from having a vulval biopsy:

A small scar will be left on the skin. It is possible for there to be a small amount of bruising or swelling.

There will be some bleeding at the time of the biopsy but the doctor/nurse specialist will aim to stop this before you leave the chair. Occasionally the bleeding may start again later on in the day. If this happens you should press down on the skin for approximately 15 minutes whilst resting lying down. If the bleeding does not stop and is heavy then you should attend the Accident and Emergency Department here at Harrogate District Hospital.

Infection – the small wound can allow infection to get into the body. If this happens the site of the biopsy will feel more uncomfortable and hot as the days go by and may start to ooze. If this happens, you should contact your GP, as you may need some antibiotic treatment.

Results

We will write to you and your GP with the results of your biopsy within the next 2-4 weeks. We may send you another appointment to see you again when the result is known to discuss any treatment that may be required. If no further treatment is required then you will be discharged back to your GP's care.

If you have any questions or concerns you can ring the Coverdale (Womens) Unit and ask to speak to a member of staff on **01423 554479**.

If you require this information in an alternative language or format (such as Braille, audiotape or large print), please ask the staff who are looking after you.