

Paediatric haematology

Skin biopsy – information for families

Information for patients, relatives and carers

Introduction

Your doctor has decided that your child needs a skin biopsy. This leaflet will explain what the test involves.

Why does my child need a skin biopsy?

Examination of the skin cells, in addition to the blood cells, can help to diagnose certain haematological conditions.

If your child has had a bone marrow transplant (BMT), a skin biopsy can be used to diagnose graft versus host disease (GVHD), an infection or a toxic reaction to medication.

What is a skin biopsy?

A skin biopsy is a minor procedure to remove a small piece of skin for further examination. The biopsy involves taking a small piece of skin using a punch biopsy needle. This is performed under a local anaesthetic, but if your child is having another operation which requires a general anaesthetic a skin biopsy can sometimes be done at the same time.

What does the test involve?

Your child's skin biopsy will be planned and discussed with you and a decision about whether it will be done under local or general anaesthetic will be made.

The punch biopsy needle will be used to remove the sample of the skin layers. Continuous pressure is then applied for up to five minutes to stop the bleeding. The site will then be dressed and bandaged as necessary.

What happens after the test?

We will give your child painkillers if they are going home after the procedure. Please ensure that you also have painkillers at home. The biopsy site will need to be checked for the next 24 hours for any signs of bleeding.

The pressure bandage should be removed after 24 hours. The remaining dressing, if clean, should be removed 48 hours after the procedure. If the Steristrips® are still intact they should be removed 72 hours after the procedure (if they begin to fall off before this time, allow them to do so).

Your child can have a shower or bath once there are signs of healing – usually about three days after the procedure.

If a suture (stitch) has been used, this will need to be removed seven days after the procedure. An appointment will be made for your child to have this done if necessary.

What happens after my child goes home?

You should ask your child if they would like any painkillers for up to five days after the procedure, especially if they have had other procedures performed at the same time.

Your child should be able to return to school the following day; however, you should make sure that they avoid PE and contact sports for one week following the test.

Please note that the above information does not apply if your child has had a bone marrow transplant and is receiving immune suppression

You should call your named nurse or the day care ward if the following occurs:

- the test site bleeds
- the test site oozes a lot of fluid
- there is redness or warmth around the site, or a temperature develops, as this is a sign of infection

BMT coordinators: 020 3312 5062 / 020 3312 5062 – 077 6699 1070

Paediatric haematology day care unit: 020 3312 5096 / 020 3312 5095

Additional patient information is available on our website:



How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3313 0088** (Charing Cross, Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte's & Chelsea hospitals), or **020 3312 7777** (St Mary's and Western Eye hospitals). You can also email PALS at imperial.pals@nhs.net. The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to express your concerns in **writing** to: Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street, London W2 1NY.

Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille, or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team: imperial.patient.information@nhs.net

Wi-fi

Wi-fi is available at our Trust. For more information visit our website: www.imperial.nhs.uk

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