

**What happens at our skin clinic?**

A 'skin check' can be defined as a comprehensive assessment and examination of a patient for any evidence of skin cancer.

We ask that you wear loose clothing and no make-up, fake tan or nail polish on either finger nails or toe nails. For a whole body check, you will be asked to undress to your underwear. If you only want a specific area checked, that's fine – simply advise your doctor.

The doctor will examine your head, face, neck, torso, legs, feet, toes, arms, hands and fingers.

Don't forget to mention to the doctor if there are any spots in hidden places – remember you can get skin cancer in areas that are not directly exposed to the sun.

**What we ask of you as a patient**

Please let us know if you cannot come to an appointment. This will enable us to see to another patient.

If the doctor asks you to return for another appointment or phone for your test results it is important that you do so.

It is your responsibility to make follow up appointments. Please see reception staff before leaving to make another appointment.

**What you can expect if you require a biopsy to be done**

The area of the skin to be biopsied will be cleansed with a suitable skin cleanser (please let your Doctor know any allergies you may have).

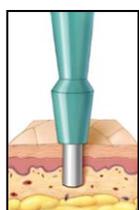
Your skin may be marked with a surgical marker or marking pen to outline the biopsy area.

You then receive a local anaesthetic to numb the biopsy site. This will be given by injection. The numbing medication can cause a burning sensation in the skin for a few seconds. Afterward, the biopsy site is numb and you shouldn't feel any pain or discomfort, but please let your Doctor know if you do feel pain.

**During the skin biopsy**

What you can expect during your skin biopsy depends on the type of biopsy you'll undergo.

**For a shave biopsy,** your doctor uses a sharp tool, double-edged razor or scalpel to cut the tissue. The depth of the incision varies depending on the type of biopsy and the part of the body being biopsied. A shave biopsy causes bleeding. Bleeding is stopped by applying pressure to the area or by a combination of pressure and a topical medication applied to the biopsy site.



**For a punch biopsy or an excisional biopsy,** the procedure involves cutting into the top layer of fat beneath the skin, so stitches may be needed to close the wound. A dressing or adhesive bandage is then placed over the site to protect the wound and prevent bleeding

The portion of skin will be examined by a pathologist and the results sent back to your Doctor.

**After the skin biopsy**

Your doctor may instruct you to keep the dressing on the biopsy site for a couple of days. Occasionally, the biopsy site bleeds after you leave the surgery. This is more likely in people taking blood-thinning medications. If this occurs, apply direct pressure to the wound for 10 to 20 minutes. If bleeding continues, contact your Doctor (after hours you are advised to go to hospital).

All biopsies cause a small scar. Some people develop a prominent, raised scar. The risk of this is increased when a biopsy is done on the neck or upper torso, such as the back or chest. Initially, the scar will be pink and then fade to white or sometimes brown. Scars fade gradually. The scar's permanent colour will be evident one or two years after the biopsy.

Try not to bump the biopsy site area or do activities that might stretch the skin. Stretching the skin could cause the wound to bleed or enlarge the scar.

Healing of the wound can take several weeks, but is usually complete within two months. Wounds on legs and feet tend to heal more slowly than those on other areas of the body.

How to care for the biopsy site while it heals:

- **Wash your hands** with soap and water before touching the biopsy site.
- **Wash the biopsy site** with soap and water. If the biopsy site is on your scalp, use shampoo.
- **Rinse** the site well.
- **Pat the site dry** with a clean towel.
- **Cover the site** with an adhesive bandage that allows the skin to ventilate. There is no benefit to using Dettol, Betadine or Savlon etc – in fact these products may delay healing.

Continue caring for the biopsy site until the stitches are removed. For shave biopsies that don't require stitches, continue wound care until the skin is healed

Try to limit/reduce the amount of movement of the affected area until the sutures are removed.

**Pain**

Pain is usually minimal and able to be controlled with paracetamol. If the wound becomes increasingly painful or tender, inflamed, warm or you develop a fever please contact us immediately during business hours or your local hospital after hours.

**Appearance**

After any sutures have been removed it may be beneficial to continue applying vaseline white petroleum jelly or massage Vitamin E oil or Bio/oil into the site twice a day.

**Further treatment**

Depending on the results of the findings when the tissue from the biopsy is examined under the microscope further surgery or other forms of treatment may be necessary.