



**Dr Julia Sen**

MEDICAL . SURGICAL . AESTHETIC

## **Excision Biopsy**

### What is an Excision Biopsy

This is a procedure where a lesion (mole, skin tag or wart or other lump) is removed and sent to a specialised laboratory where it is processed and examined by a Pathologist in order to obtain an accurate diagnosis.

### Pre-operatively

Certain medications may need to be discontinued prior to the procedure. Foods and supplements such as ginger, garlic, ginseng, ginkgo biloba and vitamin E should be avoided for two weeks prior to surgery since they may have a similar effect.

On the day of surgery no make up should be worn. You may eat and drink as normal prior to your arrival. Please arrange for someone to collect you after your surgery; it is inadvisable to drive yourself home.

Please feel free to ask any questions you may have at any point prior to the procedure.

### Surgery

We will make you comfortable and a local anaesthetic injection will be administered. This stings but works quickly and effectively. Your skin will be cleaned with an antiseptic solution and a sterile drape will be applied. Please feel free to talk to us during the procedure and if you experience any discomfort during the procedure please let us know, since the anaesthetic injection can be topped up as needed.

At the end of the procedure a dressing may be applied. If this is the case you will be advised how long to keep the dressing on.

If the procedure is on or close to your eyelids and the dressing covers one of your eyes, you should not drive home.

### Postoperative care

Simple painkillers such as paracetamol may be useful if there is any discomfort.

Ice packs (or bags of frozen peas) wrapped in a clean pillowcase or tea towel can be applied for a few minutes, up to 5 times daily for the first 3 days.

If the lesion was removed from your face, sleeping with several pillows in order to elevate the head overnight will help to reduce any swelling.

Clean the operated area using a clean, damp flannel, cotton wool pads or baby wipe; avoid immersing or splashing it with water.

Avoid vigorous exercise until the skin has healed and stitches, if used have dissolved.

Skin stitches are fine and will usually fall away within two weeks. If deeper stitches are used they dissolve over several months and fragments may sometimes present themselves through the skin. This is nothing to worry about.

Once the skin stitches have disappeared you should commence massage to the operated area 4 times daily for about 5 minutes. This helps to restore movement of the tissues and reduce the



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visibility of the scar. It is advisable to use a preparation with lubricant properties to prevent irritation of the skin. Silicone scar gels are ideal for this purpose. Silicone scar tape is also very effective. Apply it before you go to bed and remove it in the morning if it is in a cosmetically sensitive area. It can safely be left on for 24 hours or more.

As soon as the result of the biopsy is available, we will contact you to let you know.

### Risks

#### Bruising and swelling

This is expected and is more pronounced if you are taking medication which thins the blood.

#### Infection

This is a potential risk of any surgical intervention, however it is uncommon and usually responds well to oral antibiotics.

#### Incomplete excision

If required, more tissue can be removed.

#### Recurrence

Depending on the nature of the lump being removed, recurrence may be possible. Treatment is usually to surgically remove the recurrence.

#### Scarring

The surgical technique employed will have been designed to give the least visible scar, however, aftercare is important so please follow the guidance above.

#### Pigmentary changes

This tends to be more likely in darker skin types but can happen even in lighter skin tones. To minimise this do not pick at the operation site; allow any crusting to fall away naturally and wear a high SPF ( $\geq 30$ ) every day.

#### Hair loss

In hair bearing areas the follicles may be damaged and in some instances hair may not regrow in the treated area. Every effort will be made to minimise this effect.

#### Need for further surgery

If the biopsy result reports changes which require a larger area of tissue is removed.