

CARE AFTER AN ORAL BIOPSY

During an *incisional* biopsy, a small piece of tissue (soft or bony) is removed. During an *excisional* biopsy, the entire "lesion" is removed. After any type of biopsy, the tissue is then sent to a pathology laboratory for microscopic examination and diagnosis. Once a diagnosis is made, either no further treatment is needed or occasionally, more surgery may be recommended by your doctor.

To help your biopsy site heal properly:

- Begin with OTC pain relievers before the local anesthesia wears off. We recommend Tylenol®, Motrin®, Advil®, or Aleve®. Avoid aspirin as this may encourage bleeding or oozing.
- Minor bleeding is normal for sometimes 24-48 hours after a biopsy, but should decrease with time.
- If you were given gauze to apply pressure to the site, put direct, constant pressure with the gauze for 30 minutes then reapply every 30 minutes until bleeding has stopped. It is sometimes helpful to bite on damp gauze, gauze dampened in a strongly steeped but cool black tea (Lipton®, Salada®), or place a dampened tea bag against the site for 30 minutes. Black tea contains tannic acid which helps with clotting.
- Avoid hot liquids, using drinking straws or sharp foods (chips, pizza crust, hard bread) for at least 24 hours.
- Be careful eating until the local anesthesia has worn off to avoid traumatizing the biopsy site or biting your lip or tongue accidentally.
- Avoid pulling on your tongue or lips if these sites were biopsied or touching the biopsy site with your fingers as this may open the wound and cause an infection.
- Brush your teeth normally but avoid rinsing for 24 hours to allow the site to form a clot.
- After 24 hours, begin rinsing 3 times a day with warm salt water. Do not use any mouthwashes that have not been prescribed. Peroxide rinses and mouthwashes that contain alcohol are detrimental to healing so use salt water only.
- Do NOT smoke anything for 48-72 hours.
- Stitches are usually dissolvable and typically dissolve in 5 to 7 days.
- Sometimes the biopsy area is covered with a wound dressing (Perio Pack) or a chemical which may discolor the area (silver nitrate) but will disappear when the wound has healed. If a packing is used, it may fall off before your follow up visit so do not be alarmed. If placed, be gentle to the packing for it will act as a "bandage" over the biopsy site.
- Good oral hygiene in most cases prevents infections but if the site becomes more reddened, swollen or tender by post-operative day 5, please come in for an evaluation and to rule out an infection.
- Biopsy patients are usually asked to follow up 7-14 days after the procedure to review the results and discuss whether any further treatment is needed.
- Please call the office (781-235-5225) with any questions.