

Skin biopsy | Caring for your child after the procedure

Reviewed by: Alicia Bahadur, BScN (candidate), Michelle Lee, BScN, RN, Jackie Su, RN, MN, Irene Lara-Corrales, MSc, MD, Elena Pope, MD | Last reviewed: June 13, 2016

A skin biopsy involves taking a sample of your child's skin and sending it for testing in a laboratory.

How do I care for my child's skin after their biopsy?

How you care for your child's skin depends on whether your child needed stitches after their biopsy.

Biopsy with stitches	Biopsy with no stitches
1. For the first 24 hours, leave the bandage on and keep the area clean and dry.	1. For the first 24 hours, leave the bandage on and keep the area clean and dry.
2. After the first 24 hours, remove the bandage and rinse the site well. Pat it dry with a clean towel.	2. After the first 24 hours, remove the bandage and rinse the site well. Pat it dry with a clean towel.
3. Apply petroleum jelly or the antibiotic ointment recommended by your doctor to the area every day.	3. Your child's skin will form a scab as it heals. Apply the recommended antibiotic ointment every day until the scab falls off.
4. If your child prefers, cover the area of the biopsy with a new bandage.	4. If your child prefers, cover the area of the biopsy with a new bandage.
5. Arrange to have your family doctor or another health-care professional remove your child's stitches ___ days after their biopsy.	

How do I care for my child's skin if there are complications?

The risks of a skin biopsy include pain, bleeding, infections, scars and stitches popping open.

Risk	Treatment
Pain	If needed, give your child acetaminophen every four to six hours once or twice after the local anaesthetic wears off. If your child cannot take acetaminophen, ask your doctor for suggestions.
Bleeding	Apply pressure for 15 minutes. Do not peek at the bleeding site while holding pressure.
Infection (rare)	If the area becomes redder or more painful or if there is pus, have it assessed by a local healthcare professional. Your child may need oral antibiotics.
Scarring	No treatment is needed. Scarring is normal when the skin heals from a cut.
Stitches popping open	This can happen if the biopsy is done where the skin is tight or if the skin around the biopsy is bumped or stretched. Remove the stitch and clean the skin as instructed.

When will I find out about my child's biopsy results?

It takes a few weeks to get the results of a biopsy. The team will decide with you when to follow up in the clinic to review the results.

Key points

- Follow all instructions for caring for your child's skin after a biopsy.
- Call your child's doctor or see a local healthcare professional if your child's skin becomes redder or more painful or if there is pus.

<http://www.aboutkidshealth.ca/En/HealthAZ/TestsAndTreatments/Procedures/Pages/skin-biopsy-after-care.aspx>