

# TESTfacts

An Educational Health Series From National Jewish Health®



## Punch Biopsy of the Skin

### What is a punch biopsy of the skin?

Your doctor has suggested you have a punch biopsy of the skin as part of the evaluation at National Jewish Health. During a punch biopsy all or part of a skin lesion is removed. The lesion can be tested in the laboratory. The results of the biopsy will help your doctor determine your diagnosis and the best treatment for you.

### How do you get ready for the test?

- ✓ **Inform** your doctor of all the medicines you take, especially blood thinners such as Coumadin, Plavix or Lovenox.
- ✓ Check in at the front desk at the time your test is scheduled.

### What is done during the test?

When you arrive we will explain what will be done before, during and after the biopsy. If you have questions, please ask.

The area of skin where the biopsy will be done is identified and cleaned well. You will be given a local anesthetic before the procedure. This will make the area where the biopsy will be taken feel numb. The anesthetic will be given as a shot near the biopsy area. You may feel a prick during the shot. Once the anesthetic takes effect a pencil eraser sized piece of skin is removed. The area may need to be closed with stitches (sutures). The stitches will need to be removed in five days. A Band-Aid will be placed over the biopsy site.

### How do you care for the site after the biopsy?

The Band-Aid placed over the biopsy site should be kept dry and left in place for 24 hours. Follow these steps each day after 24 hours until the biopsy site is completely healed:

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1. Clean the biopsy site with soap and water.
2. Apply a thin layer of antibiotic ointment to the biopsy site.
3. Place a Band-Aid over the biopsy site.

When changing the Band-Aid observe the biopsy site for signs of bleeding. If bleeding is present apply direct pressure to the site. Also observe the biopsy site for signs of infections. These include:

- Pain,
- Redness,
- Yellow discharge and/or
- Swelling.

If you notice signs of infection call us at 303-398-1355.

#### **How long will the test take?**

You will be at National Jewish Health for about 1-2 hours. If sutures are placed, you will need to have them removed in 5 days. The sutures can be removed at National Jewish Health or by your Primary Care Provider.

#### **How do you get to your test?**

On the day of your scheduled test, check in at the Front Desk. If you have questions before or during your test please call 303-398-1355. Also, if you need to cancel the appointment or change the time please call.

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