Biopsy Procedure

During a biopsy, a small piece of tissue is removed. Then it is examined under a microscope by a *pathologist.* A pathologist is a specialist who examines tissues and cells and diagnoses abnormalities in them. Most lumps *(tumors*) on the body are not cancerous *(benign*). But tissue samples *(biopsies*) are taken when your caregiver cannot be 100% certain of what is wrong *(diagnosis*) by physical exam, x-rays, or other studies.

HOW A BIOPSY IS PERFORMED

Biopsies are often performed as same day surgery. This can be done in a hospital or clinic. Biopsies are often done with medicine that make the area of the biopsy numb (*local anesthesia*). Occasionally general anesthetics are required. In that case, you are sleeping through the procedure. Biopsies may be done in several ways:

- The entire lump is removed *(excisional*).
- A small piece of the lump or tissue is removed *(incisional*).
- A small sliver of tissue is removed by needle *(needle*).

BEFORE SURGERY

You should be present one hour prior to your procedure or as your caregiver suggests. Check in at the admissions desk for filling out necessary forms if not preregistered. There will be consent forms to sign prior to the procedure. There is a waiting area for your family while you are having your biopsy.

LET YOUR CAREGIVERS KNOW ABOUT THE FOLLOWING:

- Allergies.
- Medications taken including herbs, eye drops, over the counter medications, and creams.
- Use of steroids (by mouth or creams).
- Previous problems with anesthetics or novocaine.
- Possibility of pregnancy, if this applies.
- History of blood clots (*thrombophlebitis*).
- History of bleeding or blood problems.
- Previous surgery.
- Other health problems.

FOR COMFORT DURING THE TEST

- Try to relax as much as possible.
- Follow all instructions given to you during the test. This will help to speed up the test.
- Let your caregiver know if you are uncomfortable, anxious, or in pain.

AFTER YOUR TEST

After surgery, you will be taken to the recovery area. There a nurse will watch and check your progress. Once you're awake, stable, and taking fluids well, barring other problems you will be allowed to go home. Once home, an ice pack applied to your operative site may help with discomfort and keep the swelling down.

- You may resume normal diet and activities as directed.
- Change dressings as directed.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- Call for your results as instructed by your caregiver. Do not assume everything is normal if you have not heard from your caregiver or the medical facility. It is important for you to follow up on all of your test results.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- There is increased bleeding (more than a small spot) from the biopsy site(s).
- You notice redness, swelling, or increasing pain in the wound.
- Pus is coming from wound.
- An unexplained oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C) develops or as your caregiver suggests.
- You notice a foul smell coming from the wound or dressing.
- You develop a rash, have difficulty breathing, or have any allergic problems.

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