

What is an excisional biopsy?

An excisional biopsy is a procedure in which the doctor completely removes a lump or abnormal area from the skin or other part of the body. The tissue is then sent to a lab for tests.

When is it used?

This procedure is often used to look for cancer, infection & inflammation or to establish / confirm a doctor's diagnosis.

How do I prepare for an excisional biopsy?

Depending on the size and extent of lesion being excised, your provider will inform you of any pre-operative preparation that will best enable a successful procedure and rapid recovery.

What happens during the procedure?

Under usual circumstances, local anesthesia is used to numb just the skin and tissues that are to be cut.

The doctor will cut into or through the skin and remove the tissue. Depending on the size and type of lesion excised, the wound may be left open for drainage with closure by secondary intention (or using the body's own mechanism of healing wounds by regenerating collagen and resurfaced skin). Otherwise, sutures, metal clips or topically applied adhesive strips may be used to aid in wound closure and minimize scarring. The excised tissue is sent to the lab for tests.

What happens after the procedure?

The area of the cut should be left clean and dry. Unless otherwise specified, lotions, medication, or ointments should not be applied directly on the wound. For smaller wounds, topical neosporin (an antibacterial agent) is frequently recommended for self application twice daily for about 1 week.

At LASCMA, biopsy results are available in 3 to 5 days, but may take longer depending on the tests that are ordered.

What are the benefits of this procedure?

The procedure helps in the diagnosis of cancer, infection, and inflammation. You and your doctor can then decide on a treatment plan.

What are the risks associated with this procedure?

- The local anesthesia may not numb the area quite enough and one may feel some minor discomfort. Also, in rare cases, one may have an allergic reaction to the drug used in this type of anesthesia.
- Bruising around the biopsy site.
- Infection or bleeding at the biopsy site.

When should I call the doctor?

Call the office immediately if:

- You have any change in symptoms or worsening of pain.
- You have any drainage from the biopsy site, including bloody drainage.
- The biopsy site becomes red and warm.
- You develop a fever.

Call the office during regular office hours if:

- You have questions about the procedure or its result.
- You want to make another appointment.

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