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Biopsy Care Instructions

What is a biopsy?

- The removal of a piece of skin for diagnostic purposes
- The sample is sent to a pathologist, a doctor who examines the sample under a microscope, who then renders a diagnosis. The diagnosis will help your treating physician determine the best course of treatment.

What Should I Expect Following a Biopsy?

- There may be minimal discomfort, which can be managed as needed with Tylenol.
- Most areas will be completely healed in 1 to 2 weeks. Biopsies on the back, chest and trunk will take longer to heal.
- Since a piece of skin was removed, a scar will result. The appearance of the scar may be unnoticeable. However, lightening or darkening of the skin at the biopsy site and/or skin contour irregularity is possible.
- Full maturation of the wound usually takes 3 to 6 months. The initial pink color of the wound will eventually turn white.

How do I care for the biopsy site?

- Allow any pressure dressing applied by your physician to remain in place for 24 hours. If there is any bleeding, apply firm, **continuous** pressure to the area for 20 minutes. If this does not stop the bleeding, call our office at (865) 233-7351 or report to the nearest emergency room for evaluation.
- Clean the wound gently with soapy water every day and pat dry. Do NOT use alcohol or peroxide to cleanse the biopsy site.
- Apply antibiotic ointment (Polysporin) to the wound once a day and then cover it with a Band-Aid until the area heals. Keeping the wound moist can prevent the formation of a scab and reduce the appearance of the scarring.
- Rotate the location of the Band-Aid adhesive to avoid skin irritation.
- If there are stitches (sutures) at the biopsy site, do NOT completely submerge the biopsy site under water, until after the stitches have been removed.

Is there anything I should look for?

- Observe the wound every day for extreme tenderness or redness, which could suggest infection. Notify us immediately if either should occur.
- Notify us immediately if you notice any strong odor, pus coming from the wound, red streaks, elevated temperature, pain not relieved by Tylenol or if you develop a fever or chills.
- If you are concerned with the appearance of the biopsy site or have any questions, contact our office at (865) 233-7351.