

Aftercare instructions - biopsy of the mouth

Outpatients Patient information

The aim of this leaflet is to answers common questions about care advice after having a mouth biopsy. If you would like more information, or have any concerns, please see the contact numbers on the back of this leaflet.

Pain or swelling

Once the numbing medicine wears off, the area may feel sore. You can take over-the-counter pain relievers like **Paracetamol** or **Ibuprofen**, unless you have allergies to them.

The numbing effect can last between **90 minutes and four hours**. Try to take the pain medicine before the numbness wears off. You may also notice some swelling or bruising. This should go away in a few days. **Tongue biopsies** can be more painful than biopsies in other areas of the mouth.

Bleeding

Your doctor or nurse will check for bleeding before you leave. Some small bleeding or oozing is normal during the first **24 hours**. If bleeding starts again, you can stop it by pressing on the area for **20 minutes** with a rolled-up, damp cloth or handkerchief. You can do this again if needed. If the bleeding doesn't stop or you're worried, please contact us right away. It might help to put a towel on your pillow while you sleep to avoid blood stains.

Stitches

The stitches inside your mouth are **dissolvable** (they will disappear by themselves). They may take a few days to a couple of weeks to completely dissolve.

Going back to work

You can decide when to go back to work depending on how you feel and what kind of job you have. If the surgery was complicated, you may need more time to rest.

Taking care of your mouth

- **First 24-48 hours:** avoid hard, chewy foods. Eat soft foods only. Be careful with hot drinks or food, as your mouth may still be numb.
- **No rinsing or gargling** for the first **24 hours** to avoid disturbing the area. After 24 hours, rinse with warm saltwater (½ teaspoon of salt in 250ml of water) **3-4 times a day**, especially after eating. Do this for about **10 days**.

- Take it easy for the day and avoid exercise.
- You can brush your teeth like normal, just be gentle around the area of surgery.
- **No smoking or vaping** for at least **72 hours**. Smoking can cause pain, slow healing, and increase the risk of infection. Find your nearest NHS Stop Smoking Service from the NHS Smokefree website, or call the Smokefree National Helpline on 0300 123 1044. You can also ask for advice about nicotine patches, gum, and other nicotine replacement from your local pharmacy.

If you're unsure about anything, or feel something's not right, please contact us.

Contact details

Outpatients Oral Maxillo-Facial

Tel: 0300 019 2145

(Monday - Friday 8.30am-5pm)

Day of Surgery Unit

Tel: 0300 019 2150

(7.30am-8pm)

Head and Neck Ward C4

Tel: 0300 019 2415

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To ask for this leaflet in larger print, please contact the patient experience team on **0300 019 8499** or email uhd.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net.

Poole Hospital, Longfleet Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 2JB

Author: Deborah Ruffell Date: January 2026 Version: One Review date: January 2029 Ref: 143/25

t: 01202 665511 w: www.uhd.nhs.uk  @UHDTrust  @uhd_nhs

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