

BIOPSY

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There are times when a health practitioner may notice an area that looks different in comparison to the surrounding tissues. In the mouth, this may occur on the soft tissue such as the gums, tongue, roof of the mouth, cheeks or lips, or in the hard tissues such as the jaw bones. It may be your presenting complaint or an incidental finding during a routine examination. Your health practitioner may refer this to someone who has more experience in handling these rarer lesions. There are hundreds of different conditions that can present in the mouth. They may be described as a swelling, lump, growth, bump, ulcer or sore, just to name a few. Just because you have been referred for a biopsy does not mean that is necessarily sinister but it is always worthwhile to get these things checked out for peace of mind.

A biopsy is a medical test commonly performed by a surgeon that involves removing a small sample of the tissue for examination by a Pathologist to determine the presence or extent of a disease. With experience, clinicians develop a '*surgical sieve*' to compartmentalise what a presenting lesion could potentially be. They will rule out others carrying out simple tests, but ultimately will require a biopsy for confirmation of their differential diagnoses. The sample may be one, multiple or the entirety of the lesion. The surgeon will then send this to a Pathology Laboratory with notes outlining their clinical findings.

The Pathologist will use particular chemical tests and look at the sample under a microscope to come up with a diagnosis. They will then write a report and return this to the surgeon. Your surgeon will discuss the Pathologist's findings and whether any further treatment is necessary.

Your surgeon will take your Medicare details for submission of the sample and the Pathologist will bill you directly. You may receive some monies back from Medicare for their report.

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If you have any questions, please discuss this with your surgeon.

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06/03/2019