


# NOTTINGHAM SUPPORT GROUP FOR CARERS OF CHILDREN WITH ECZEMA

In association with : Nottingham University Hospitals   
NHS Trust

Written by Professor Hywel Williams, Dr Ruth Murphy, Dr Jane Ravenscroft, Nurse Consultant Sandra Lawton and parents on behalf of the Nottingham Support Group for Carers of Children with Eczema.

## **Skin Biopsy (Minor Skin Surgery) - Information for Parents**

### **What is a Skin Biopsy?**

We are making an appointment for your child to have a skin biopsy. This simply means removing a small bit of skin under a local anaesthetic. Normally, only a very small piece of skin is taken (a few millimetres) and the procedure takes about 20 minutes. The biopsy will allow us to learn more about your child's skin condition by examining it under a microscope.

A doctor in clinic will have explained why your child needs this, but if you do not understand the reason for this biopsy, or would like to know more, please ask the doctor when you come for the procedure. You may change your mind or ask for a second opinion if you do not feel that the biopsy is the right treatment for your child.

All patients have a consultant who is in overall charge of their care, but this may not be the doctor who will carry out your child's biopsy. Please ask if you do not know the name of your child's consultant. As Queen's Medical Centre is a teaching hospital, there may be students present at your child's biopsy. Please let the theatre staff know if you do not wish to have students present.

### **Before your Child's Skin Biopsy**

Your child may eat and drink normally before their minor operation. Please arrive in good time for your appointment. Parking can be difficult at QMC, so allow plenty of time.

Tell the doctor if your child :

- Has any other serious medical condition
- Is diabetic
- Has any lung or breathing problems
- Has any heart problems
- Has any allergies or is allergic to local anaesthetic

### **Local Anaesthetic**

Your child's skin biopsy will be carried out under local anaesthetic. A local anaesthetic is a drug that numbs the skin by temporarily switching off nerves in the skin so that no pain is felt. A cream can be used to numb the surface of the skin beforehand, but an injection is usually needed to reach deeper parts of the skin.

### **Local Anaesthetic Cream**

Your child may be given a cream called EMLA cream. This will numb the surface of the skin and is sometimes used to get the skin ready for the local anaesthetic injection. If your child has been given EMLA cream, it should be put on 1½ -2 hour before the biopsy.


Put on a mound of cream the size of a 10 pence piece and cover the area with the see-through dressing given to you in clinic. If your child is young, you may wish to cover the area with a bandage. This can then be left in place until you are seen at the hospital.

Remember to make a note of the time when you put on the cream and be careful you don't get it near your eyes or your child's eyes. Wash your hands afterwards. EMLA should NOT be put on broken skin or eczema.

website - [www.nottinghameczema.org.uk](http://www.nottinghameczema.org.uk)

email - [enquiry@nottinghameczema.org.uk](mailto:enquiry@nottinghameczema.org.uk)

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## Local Anaesthetic Injection

The local anaesthetic injection is injected around the area where the biopsy will take place. This may sting for a few seconds, but then the skin will quickly go numb. Even when it is numb, it is possible to feel some pressure or movement, so don't be surprised if your child says they can still feel something. They will not feel any pain. Please tell the doctor if your child seems to be in pain or uncomfortable. Local anaesthetics work for a few hours. After this time, the feeling in the area should go back to normal.

## Are there any risks or complications with a local anaesthetic?

Serious problems with local anaesthetics are very rare indeed. The main possible problems are described below:

*Not enough anaesthesia* can happen but is corrected by giving more local anaesthetic. Sometimes, other types of local anaesthetic are used as well. Always tell the doctor if your child is in pain.

*Allergy* to local anaesthetics is extremely rare. Many people have been told, or think they are allergic to local anaesthetic given at the dentist. This is usually not correct, but it is important that you tell the person giving the local anaesthetic about any problems your child has had in the past.

*Bleeding* can happen if the needle used to inject the local anaesthetic hits a blood vessel. This usually leaves a bruise only.

*Permanent nerve damage* after local anaesthetic is very rare indeed. Occasionally the local anaesthetic has a longer effect than expected (1-2 days) but this usually wears off on its own.

## Summary

A local anaesthetic is a very safe and effective way of numbing the area where the biopsy will take place and will provide pain relief after the biopsy. It has been recommended as the best way to provide anaesthetic for your child's biopsy. Risks and complications are very rare. If you have any questions that are not answered by this leaflet, please ask the person giving the local anaesthetic or another member of the healthcare team.

## Other Information

After your child's biopsy, the area may be sore. It is all right to give your child the pain relief that would normally have.

We may be able to provide a play specialist to distract your child during the biopsy if you or your child feels this may help. Please discuss this with your doctor or nurse in clinic, as this does have to be arranged for your child before the biopsy.

If you have any questions or worries, please remember to write them down and ask us.

For further advice please contact  
Nurse Consultant Dermatology Sandra Lawton  
Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust  
Queen's Medical Centre  
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Nottingham  
NG7 2UH

Email : [pils@nottinghameczema.org.uk](mailto:pils@nottinghameczema.org.uk)  
Website : [www.nottinghameczema.org.uk](http://www.nottinghameczema.org.uk)

For advice on support issues please contact the NSGCCE via the website [www.nottinghameczema.org.uk](http://www.nottinghameczema.org.uk) and click on the contact icon



at the top of most pages or email us at

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