



Biopsy

For your dental health.

What is a Biopsy?

If we cannot easily diagnose a growth or lesion by examining it visually, we will often recommend a biopsy. When we perform a biopsy, we surgically remove tissue - either a small, representative portion, or the entire lesion - then send it to a laboratory for microscopic analysis. In many cases, the definite diagnosis cannot be made without this microscopic examination.

In some situations, we will perform the biopsy in our office, using the same local anesthetic that we use for routine dental procedures, like fillings. We may also refer you to a dental specialist to perform the biopsy procedure.

Biopsies are typically painless and the lining of the tissues within your mouth (called the mucosa) normally heal very rapidly. Rinsing with warm salt water is often the only treatment that we recommend to minimize discomfort and prevent infection. Dissolve one teaspoon of salt in a cup of warm water, then gently swish and spit.



When We Will Recommend a Biopsy

- When careful examination, together with your medical and dental history, fails to lead to a diagnosis.
- When we believe the lesion may be pre-cancerous (as is often the case with white lesions such as leukoplakia, hyperkeratosis, or epithelial hyperplasia).
- When lesions that we believe are non-cancerous do not respond to treatment.
- When there is some factor in your health history or lifestyle, such as the prolonged use of alcohol or tobacco, which might predispose you to developing oral cancer.
- When the lesion shows visual signs of being cancerous; it's long-lasting or increases rapidly in size, for example, or it ulcerates, extends beneath the surface, or adheres to the adjacent tissues.

We may decide to refer you to an oral and maxillofacial surgeon for your biopsy. If this is the case, it is crucial that you follow through without delay.

