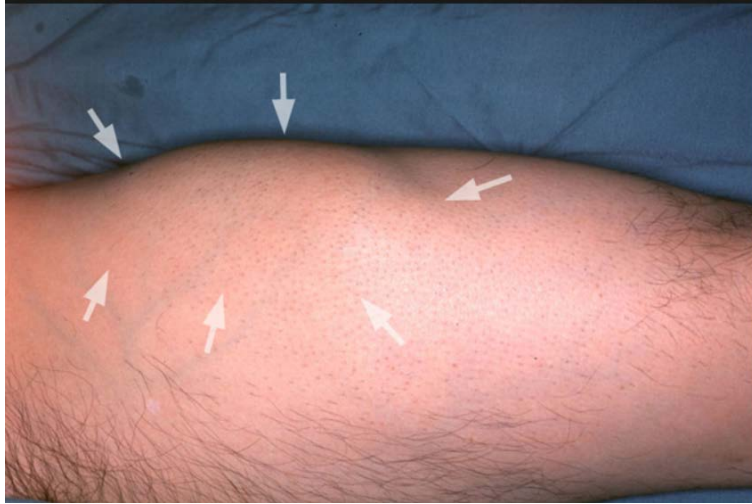


Discharge Guidelines

Lower Extremity Open Biopsy Soft Tissue Mass Thigh/Leg/Foot

Please note: These are general guidelines to help answer the most common questions patients have after their biopsy. The photos in these guidelines WILL NOT necessarily match your exact biopsy site.



Example of a soft tissue mass in the lower extremity.



Example of a small incision with dissolvable sutures following an open biopsy of a soft tissue mass.

Daily Incision Care

- Look at your incision and check for openings, drainage, swelling, redness, changes in color, or bleeding. If you detect any of the above problems, contact your surgeon's office.
- Change your dry dressing daily or leave uncovered if there is no drainage.
- Sutures (unless dissolvable sutures were used) or staples usually are removed 2 weeks after surgery.
- Once sutures/staples are removed, you can use vitamin E lotion, aloe cream or any moisturizer to massage your incision.

Activity

- Use supports (crutches, walker, cane) as directed to keep excess weight off the extremity until adequate healing has taken place.
- Using crutches makes it difficult to lift/carry objects, so ask for help when you need to transport anything large. Remember that any excess weight will stress your leg, so avoid lifting heavy objects as much as possible.
- A brace, air cast boot or post-operative boot may also be prescribed to provide additional support.
- You may return to work or school if you limit activities that involve using the leg/foot that has been operated on.

Diet

- Your appetite may be less than normal after surgery.
- Incorporate proteins and plenty of fluids into your diet, which will aid in the healing process.
- Be sure to increase the amount of fiber in your diet after surgery to prevent constipation.

Medication

- Continue to take your regular medications.
- If necessary, take prescribed pain medication (narcotics) as directed.

- DO NOT drink alcohol or drive while taking narcotic pain medication.
- If you are taking narcotics, you should take some type of laxative to prevent opioid-induced constipation.

Common Problems

- If you experience pain and/or swelling, try elevating the site for relief or apply ice – do not leave ice on for more than 20 minutes to prevent frost burn.
- For constipation (not being able to move your bowels), drink plenty of water and non-carbonated fluids, and eat foods that are high in fiber (e.g. bran, prunes, fruit, whole wheat breads). There are numerous over-the-counter medications available to help relieve constipation such as Dulcolax, Magnesium Citrate or Miralax. Ask your local pharmacist to assist you in finding one that is right for you.
- If you smoked cigarettes before the surgery, DO NOT START SMOKING AGAIN! Smoking (the nicotine) causes constriction of blood vessels preventing adequate blood flow to the operative area and can delay healing. If you need assistance with this, please contact the MGH Quit Smoking Service at 617-726-7443.

Follow-up

- Schedule a follow-up appointment with your surgeon 1-2 weeks from the biopsy date to discuss biopsy results and treatment plans.

Questions/Concerns

- For any questions, call your surgeon/nurse practitioner.
- Drs. Kevin Raskin, Joseph Schwab, Santiago Lozano-Calderon: 617-724-3700
- Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Anne Fiore: 617-724-7630

These instructions are basic post-procedure guidelines. Your surgeon/nurse practitioner may give you more specific instructions. Refer to our website for more information: <http://www.massgeneral.org/orthoncology/education>

A Fiore, DNP (07/2018)