

## PATIENT INFORMATION

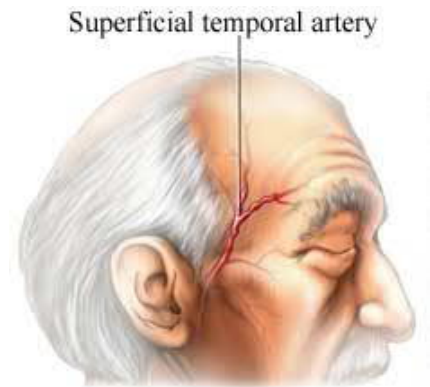
# Temporal Artery Biopsy



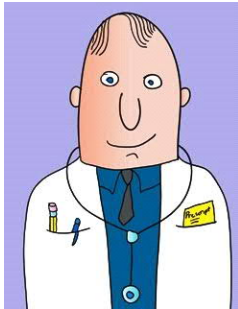
**Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery Department**

## What is a Temporal Artery Biopsy?

A sample will be taken from a small blood vessel that runs in front of your ear and across your temple. This is safe and does not affect the overall blood supply as there are many other blood vessels which supply that area. The sample is examined under a microscope and you will be informed whether or not there are any abnormal changes. The Maxillofacial Surgery Department will carry out the biopsy but if you are diagnosed with Temporal/Giant cell arteritis this will be treated by the Rheumatology Department. The biopsy result may show no abnormal changes but this is important as it allows Rheumatology to consider other causes for your symptoms. The biopsy is not a treatment and will not cure any inflammation that is present.



## What does the procedure involve?



- The procedure takes approximately 45 minutes.
- You will be given a local anaesthetic (injection) to the skin overlying the artery to numb the area.
- A small amount of hair may be removed but this will grow back.
- An incision is then made over the artery and a section of the artery is removed (2cm).
- The ends of the artery are either clipped with small metal clips or tied with stitches.
- The wound is closed with stitches.
- You can eat before the procedure and drive afterwards

## How to look after the wound



If a dressing is placed, this can normally be removed after 1-2 days. The wound should be kept dry for 3-4 days and then washed gently. Avoid touching the wound in order to keep it clean. You may be given an ointment to apply to the wound 2-3 times daily until your stitches are removed and this helps prevent an infection. Stitches can be removed after 7-10 days at your GP. Sometimes dissolving stitches are placed which don't need to be removed and you will be informed if this is the case. If tissue glue is used, this will set uneventfully.

## Where is the procedure performed?

The surgery will be in the day surgery unit or main theatre at Torbay Hospital although sometimes in Teignmouth Community Hospital. You should be prepared to stay in the hospital for the whole morning or afternoon as there will be other patients on the theatre list and you may not be first.



## What are the benefits of the surgery?

The artery is examined under the microscope and if there is inflammation you may be diagnosed with Temporal Arteritis which can be treated.

The **risks** involved with the procedure are small but the following things are likely to occur.

- Following the surgery the area will be **tender** and may **swell**.
- There is a small risk of **bleeding** afterwards but this can be managed.
- There is a small risk of **infection** – look out for redness and increasing pain or discharge from the wound.
- You will have a 3-4cm **scar** at the surgical site but this is usually in the hairline.
- Very rarely, a vein will be sampled. This could mean that the procedure will need to be repeated.
- There is a small risk of **muscle weakness** affecting movement of your eyebrow and the area over the incision may remain **numb**.
- You may develop **bruising** around your temple/eye but this is normal and should resolve fairly quickly.



## Are there any alternatives to having the Temporal Artery Biopsy?

There are other investigations that Rheumatology will arrange such as blood tests but the biopsy is important to try to confirm the diagnosis of Temporal Arteritis. Ultrasound scanning is a possible investigation but it is not as accurate as temporal artery biopsy.

## What to do with your normal medication

Take your medications as you would normally at the usual time. If you take blood thinning medication you do not need to stop this. If you are on Warfarin, your INR will be checked on the day and provided it is below 4 you can have your surgery. After your procedure we would advise that you don't take aspirin as pain relief as this may result in bleeding post operatively.



## Further Information

You will meet your surgeon on the day of the procedure and they will discuss the surgery with you. You shouldn't need a follow up appointment with the maxillofacial team but be assured that if you have any concerns regarding the wound you can contact us. You will have a review appointment with Rheumatology a few weeks after your biopsy for the results.

If you have any concerns please contact the main hospital switchboard and ask to speak to the oral and maxillofacial surgeon on call. This will not be the surgeon who carried out your procedure but they will be able to give you advice.

Please write down any questions you have. Bring this leaflet with you on the day and your questions can be answered.

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For further assistance or to receive this information in a different format, please contact the department which created this leaflet.