



[Home](#) → [Medical Encyclopedia](#) → Gum biopsy

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Gum biopsy

A gum biopsy is a surgery in which a small piece of gingival (gum) tissue is removed and examined.

How the Test is Performed

A painkiller is sprayed into the mouth in the area of the abnormal gum tissue. You may also have an injection of numbing medicine. A small piece of gum tissue is removed and checked for problems in the lab. Sometimes stitches are used to close the opening created for the biopsy.

How to Prepare for the Test

You may be told not to eat for a few hours before the biopsy.

How the Test will Feel

The painkiller put in your mouth should numb the area during the procedure. You may feel some tugging or pressure. If there is bleeding, the blood vessels may be sealed off with an electric current or laser. This is called electrocauterization. After the numbness wears off, the area may be sore for a few days.

Why the Test is Performed

This test is done to look for the cause of abnormal gum tissue.

Normal Results

This test is only done when gum tissue looks abnormal.

What Abnormal Results Mean

Abnormal results may indicate:

- Amyloidosis
- Noncancerous mouth sores (the specific cause can be determined in many cases)
- Oral cancer (for example, squamous cell carcinoma)

Risks

Risks for this procedure include:

- Bleeding from the biopsy site
- Infection of the gums
- Soreness

Considerations

Avoid brushing the area where the biopsy was performed for 1 week. You may be given a mouthwash to keep the area clean for a week after the procedure.

Alternative Names

Biopsy - gingiva (gums)

References

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