

Laser Excision of Mouth Lesion

You have an area inside your mouth that requires removal and the surgeon that has seen you has decided that using a laser would be best for you. A laser has many advantages over other types of surgery. It tends to produce less bleeding, swelling and pain.

What does the treatment involve?

Laser treatment may take place under a general anaesthetic, ie you will be put to sleep completely. While you are asleep your surgeon will remove the affected area in your mouth with the laser. If the area being removed is cancerous or pre-cancerous, then some apparently normal tissue surrounding the area will be removed for safety.

How will I feel after the treatment?

Although laser treatment tends to be less painful than other forms of surgery, you will still have some discomfort. Your doctor will arrange painkillers for you.

Will there be much bleeding?

The wound produced by laser surgery tends to bleed less than other sorts of wounds. Immediately following surgery, the area will look charred. This is normal.

If the area oozes or bleeds following surgery, it can usually be stopped by applying pressure over the area for at least 10 minutes with a rolled-up handkerchief or swab. If the bleeding does not stop, please contact the clinic.

When can I return to work?

This largely depends on your job and how you feel after the procedure. Most people may require up to a week or so off work.

Are there any other things I should do?

On the day of surgery, you should avoid rinsing your mouth out vigorously as this may cause bleeding. You should clean your teeth as normally as possible but be careful in the area close to the laser wound. If you find that food sticks to the wound then the area can be gently rinsed with a mouthwash or warm salt water (dissolve a teaspoon of kitchen salt in a cup of warm water) commencing on the day after surgery.

How long will the laser wound take to heal?

The wound may look quite large immediately following surgery but it heals remarkably quickly. After a week or so you will notice a yellow or white slough appearing over the area. This is normal and does not mean it is infected.

In all, it will take about four weeks for the laser wound to heal. By the end of this time, it will appear almost normal since the surrounding skin of the mouth will grow over it to produce a pink appearance.

Will I need another appointment?

A review appointment will be arranged to see you to check the healing of the wound. Any tissue removed at the time of surgery will be routinely looked at under a microscope and the results of this biopsy will be discussed with you when you return.