

Tips & Tricks #14



Skin Biopsies

Dermatologic conditions are often challenging. Here are a few Do's and Don'ts to try to get the most from your biopsies.

DO

- Be gentle
- Collect multiple samples that represent the range of lesions
- Use incisional biopsies or punch biopsies that are at a minimum of 4mm in diameter
- Include crusts!!!
- Biopsy before anti-inflammatory (corticosteroid) therapy
- Promptly immerse samples in formalin
- Label samples if they are from different areas
- Submit a thorough history with photographs when available

DON'T

- Do not surgically prepare the site if the lesions are in the epidermis or dermis
- Do not use electrocautery or laser for small biopsies
- Do not grasp samples or lesions with tissue forceps
- Do not use a biopsy instrument that is too small

For skin biopsies a good history is essential. Often, we can narrow changes down to a few lesions and it is the clinical presentation that differentiates them.

A good Dermatologic History should include:

- Age, breed, sex
- Lesion distribution
- Lesion appearance, severity and duration
- Influence of any treatments/recent therapies
- Other clinical problems
- Abnormalities in blood work or urinalysis results
- Faecal examination results

AND do not forget to tell us what you are trying to rule out!

Dermatologic conditions

