

## SASH SKIN HISTOPATHOLOGY SERVICE

### OVERVIEW

SASH provide a skin histopathology service to our referring vet partners.

Biopsies are sent directly to the lab for processing, with the slides forwarded to SASH for reporting by our Specialist Dermatologists – Dr Linda Vogelneust and Dr Philippa Ravens. Reports contain practical diagnostic and treatment advice for each patient.

The current cost for SASH's skin histopathology service is \$299. A Second Opinion can also be provided for skin biopsies already processed, at a cost of \$199. All prices are inclusive of GST.

### LOGISTICS

Biopsies can be submitted via your usual couriers to either Vetnostics or IDEXX.

Results from **Vetnostics take 3-4 days**. Send biopsies with the [SASH / Vetnostics Skin Biopsy submission form](#) via your Vetnostics courier. For regional areas without service there is an express post option outlined on the form.

Results from **IDEXX take 7-10 days**. Send samples with the [SASH / IDEXX Skin Biopsy submission form](#) via your usual IDEXX courier.

We also ask that photographs of lesions and a summarised history of the problem to be emailed to [dermatology@sashvets.com](mailto:dermatology@sashvets.com).

For skin biopsies already processed, complete the **Second Opinion submission form**, scan and email along with any available images and summarised history to [dermatology@sashvets.com](mailto:dermatology@sashvets.com). We also ask that you request your lab send H&E recuts of the biopsy slides to Drs Vogelneust and Ravens to the address on the form.

### SKIN BIOPSY RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Preparation

- **DO NOT scrub the skin surface prior to taking samples:** important information in the surface layers (crusts and inflammatory cells, infectious organisms, keratinocyte layering) can be removed by cleaning
- Clip hair lightly, only if necessary
- Where autoimmune disease is considered possible, immunosuppressive and immunomodulatory drugs should ideally be withdrawn at least 2 weeks prior to biopsy sampling. Please discuss with our Dermatologists if you are unsure whether this is necessary / possible.

#### Sample size and number

- **Try to take AT LEAST 6 biopsies from a range of representative lesions**
- **8mm punches (or similarly large ellipses) should be used where possible**
- 4mm punches should be used for nasal planum, footpad or very small lesions
- If the different samples are likely to be from the same disease process, then you can place the samples in the same pot
- If the lesions are likely to be neoplastic, then the samples should be placed in separate pots and the site noted on the pots

Sydney ABN 25 612 976 315 Phone (02) 9889 0289 **Central Coast** ABN 62 613 557 672 Phone 02 4311 1311 [www.sashvets.com](http://www.sashvets.com)

### Specific skin lesions

- It is not necessary in most cases to submit normal looking skin along with lesional skin. The exception to this may be for non-inflammatory alopecic diseases
- Alopecic disorders: collect samples from areas that are most alopecic, partially alopecic and normal. In general, pustules, vesicles and crusts are high yield lesions
- Ulcers and bullae: the adjacent unaffected skin should be included. An elliptical biopsy is preferred
- Depigmenting lesions: collect grey areas.
- Subcutaneous / pannicular lesions: excisional biopsies are best

### Technique

- If using a biopsy punch, twist the punch in one direction only
- Use biopsy forceps to grasp the sample gently from the subcutis, rather than grabbing the epidermis, which can cause compression artifact
- Do NOT use lignocaine subcutaneously as this may inhibit bacterial growth
- Take the punch biopsy or ellipse and then excise and discard the epidermis
- Submit the deeper tissue without the epidermis in a sterile pot with a sterile swab and a small amount of sterile water or saline
- Note that SASH do not culture samples on site, so these samples should be submitted to your preferred laboratory with their normal submission form
- Snip the attachment at the base of the sample with scissors, blot the excess blood from the biopsy sample on swabs and immediately place the sample in 10% buffered formalin

### Deep tissue samples for culture

- Use surgical prep to sterilize the surface of the skin prior to taking the sample
- Do NOT use lignocaine subcutaneously as this may inhibit bacterial growth
- Take the punch biopsy or ellipse and then excise and discard the epidermis
- Submit the deeper tissue without the epidermis in a sterile pot with a sterile swab and a small amount of sterile water or saline
- **Note that SASH do not culture samples on site**, so these samples should be submitted to your preferred laboratory with their normal submission form