

## Instructions for taking skin biopsies

Please adhere to the following instructions to facilitate an optimal diagnosis by the dermatopathologist:

1. Skin biopsies should be taken before the start of any treatments. If the animal is treated with corticosteroids, this medication should be interrupted **four weeks prior** to the taking of the skin biopsy.
2. **Number of biopsies:** If possible, please take 2-3 biopsies from altered (lesional) skin areas and one biopsy from a normal (non-lesional) skin area.
3. **Location of the biopsy:** depends on the disease
4. The site of the biopsy **should not be shaved**, however, if hair are present they can be cut shorter with scissors. The site of the biopsy should not be cleaned or disinfected prior to the taking of the sample. If possible, please mark the direction of hair growth on the skin sample with a felt pen.
5. Punch biopsy: If possible, use **6 mm punches** (for large animals even 8 mm punches). Only in very small animals 4 mm punches should be used. The skin patch should be excised together with the underlying subcutis. Please take the punch biopsy completely within a lesional site and not at the border to normal skin. When removing the skin patch from the punch, please be careful **not to squeeze the biopsy** forcefully.
6. **Fixation:** 4% Formalin (1:10 dilution of the 37-40% stock solution). If possible use separate containers for each biopsy. Mark the location from which the biopsy was taken on each container, fix the sample, and send it to our institute.
7. **Anamnesis:** Please give an accurate description of the symptoms, location, and type and pattern of changes. Please note the site(s) of biopsy taking. Please note any kind of medication and response to that medication if applicable.