

Frequently Asked Questions

How can I get a copy of my results?

Your dermatopathology report is part of your medical record, and, thus, you have a right to have a copy of this report. The best way to obtain your results is to ask your doctor or his/her staff to provide you with a copy because it will give you a chance to discuss the results with your doctor and to understand his/her recommendations and plans for your treatment. You can also obtain a copy of your results directly from UNC Medical Records by calling (919) 966-2336 or going to the following website:

<http://www.unhealthcare.org/site/healthpatientcare/medinfomgmt/RecordsReq.htm/>

Why did I get a bill from a Dermatopathologist who I never met?

Although you may never meet the dermatopathologist who signed out your biopsy, we are highly trained physicians who are experts in the diagnosis of skin biopsies. We are a critical component of your care. We work “behind the scenes” for you with your health care provider to make sure they receive the correct diagnosis and other information about your skin condition so that they can make the best recommendations and decisions about your medical care.

Will you bill my insurance?

Yes, your insurance will be billed if a copy of your insurance card or your insurance information is provided with the paperwork that accompanies your specimen or previously prepared slides. The University of North Carolina is contracted with and accepts most insurance plans.

Why was the UNC Dermatopathology Service chosen to test my specimen?

Health care providers choose the UNC-CH Dermatopathology Service because of our reputation for expertise, excellent personal/customer service, and fast results. We have a skilled laboratory staff who takes pride in providing excellent quality and prompt, courteous customer service.

How can I send my specimen to you?

If you wish that a specimen or slide consultation for a second opinion be sent to us, please inform your health care provider of your request. They can contact us at 919-843-2482 to arrange for the specimen or slides to be sent to us.

When will my results be ready?

We routinely process and complete cases within 24 hours of receiving the specimen. Sometimes, special stains are required to make the diagnosis. Some special stains and level sections are done the same day that they are ordered and allow for completion of the case in the same day. Other stains require overnight processing and are ready the following day.

Who are pathologists?

Pathologists are physicians (medical doctors) who specialize in the analysis of tissues obtained from patients. Your health care provider submits your specimen to us, and after our analysis, we communicate the results of this analysis to your physician to assist him/her in making decisions about your medical care. Pathology is considered a specialty within medicine, like surgery, cardiology, etc. Dermatopathology is considered a sub-specialty within pathology and dermatology much like cardiac surgery is considered a sub-specialty within general surgery. Like other doctors, pathologists are graduates of medical schools (4 additional years of study after college). We then undertake additional intensive study for 4 more years in approved pathology residencies. Pathologists must also meet certain requirements for years spent in training and pass various certification exams before they are certified as specialists in pathology by the American Board of Pathology.

Why is it important to have a Board-Certified Dermatopathologist read my skin biopsy?

Dermatopathologists are physicians, who after spending 4 years of training in either a pathology or dermatology residency program, spend an additional 1-2 years in intensive study focused solely on diseases of the skin. We specialize in diagnosing skin biopsies under the microscope, which is what we do all day long. Because of this extra training and daily work, we have additional expertise in diagnosing skin biopsies. In addition, we also have certification as specialists in dermatopathology by the American Boards of Pathology and Dermatology.

Does it cost more to have a Board-Certified Dermatopathologist read my biopsy?

No, it does not. Board-certified dermatopathologists use the same CPT codes to bill your insurance as general pathologists and general dermatologists do.

What about second opinions?

It is not uncommon (and is often a good idea) to obtain a “second opinion” about your diagnosis or results, especially if the interpretation or potential treatment plans are complicated. We also review material prepared elsewhere for patients who are referred for treatment at UNC. When we are finished, we will send a

report to the referring health care provider and to the Pathologist who originally reported the case. Your insurance will be billed for this second opinion/expert consultation if a copy of your insurance card or your insurance information is provided with the paperwork that accompanies your referral. The University of North Carolina is contracted with and accepts most insurance plans.

Does the UNC Dermatopathology Service provide services outside of North Carolina?

Yes! We provide services throughout North Carolina and in other states as well. In addition, we can consult on cases from any state in the nation. For health care providers outside of North Carolina who wish to send specimens, please call 919-843-2482 so that we can arrange for the transportation service that best fits your needs.