

then lifted with forceps, and the bottom is cut with iris scissors. Biopsy sites may or may not need suture closure, depending on size and location.

KOH Preparation A potassium hydroxide (KOH) preparation is performed on scaling skin lesions where a fungal infection is suspected. The edge of such a lesion is scraped gently with a no. 15 scalpel blade. The removed scale is collected on a glass microscope slide, treated with 1 or 2 drops of a solution of 10–20% KOH, and placement of a cover slip. KOH dissolves keratin and allows easier visualization of fungal elements. Brief heating of the slide accelerates dissolution of keratin. When the preparation is viewed under the microscope, the refractile hyphae are seen more easily when the light intensity is reduced and the condenser is lowered. This technique can be used to identify hyphae in dermatophyte infections, pseudohyphae and budding yeasts in *Candida* infections, and “spaghetti and meatballs” yeast forms in tinea versicolor. The same sampling technique can be used to obtain scale for culture of selected pathogenic organisms.

Tzanck Smear A Tzanck smear is a cytologic technique most often used in the diagnosis of herpesvirus infections (herpes simplex virus [HSV] or varicella-zoster virus [VZV]) (see Figs. 193-1 and 193-3). An early vesicle, not a pustule or crusted lesion, is unroofed, and the base of the lesion is scraped gently with a scalpel blade. The material is placed on a glass slide, air-dried, and stained with Giemsa or Wright’s stain. Multinucleated epithelial giant cells suggest the presence of HSV or VZV; culture, immunofluorescence microscopy, or genetic testing must be performed to identify the specific virus.

Diascopy Diascopy is designed to assess whether a skin lesion will blanch with pressure as, for example, in determining whether a red lesion is hemorrhagic or simply blood-filled. Urticaria (Fig. 56-11) will blanch with pressure, whereas a purpuric lesion caused by necrotizing vasculitis (Fig. 56-4) will not. Diascopy is performed by pressing a microscope slide or magnifying lens against a lesion and