

Patient Information: Cryotherapy for Skin Lesions

### **What is Cryotherapy?**

Cryotherapy is a **non-invasive treatment** that uses liquid nitrogen to freeze and destroy abnormal skin cells. It is commonly used to treat benign skin lesions such as **warts, skin tags, and actinic keratosis** (pre-cancerous patches), and is sometimes used for superficial skin cancers under medical advice.

### **How Does Cryotherapy Work?**

During cryotherapy, **liquid nitrogen** is applied to the lesion using a spray or cotton-tipped applicator. The extreme cold causes the cells to freeze, damaging and ultimately destroying the abnormal tissue. The area may turn white as it freezes, and a blister may form afterward as the skin heals.

### **What to Expect During the Procedure**

- **Quick and Simple:** Cryotherapy is typically an outpatient procedure lasting just a few minutes.
- **Mild Discomfort:** You may feel a stinging or burning sensation during the application. This usually subsides quickly.
- **No Anaesthesia Required:** Cryotherapy usually doesn't require anaesthesia, though your doctor may use a topical anaesthetic if you're sensitive to cold.

### **Aftercare Instructions**

1. **Keep the Area Clean and Dry:** Gently clean the area daily and avoid unnecessary contact.
2. **Avoid Picking at the Area:** A blister or scab may form; allow it to heal naturally.
3. **Pain Relief:** Over-the-counter pain relievers, such as paracetamol, can help with any discomfort.
4. **Avoid Sun Exposure:** Protect the treated area from sun exposure to prevent pigmentation changes.

### **Expected Side Effects**

- **Redness and Swelling:** Common at the treatment site.
- **Blistering:** A small blister may form and should be left to heal on its own.
- **Scabbing:** The area may form a scab, which will eventually fall off.

### **Potential Risks and Complications**

- **Infection:** Keep the area clean to reduce infection risk. Contact your doctor if you notice increased redness, warmth, or discharge.
- **Scarring:** Some scarring or pigmentation changes may occur, particularly in individuals with darker skin.
- **Temporary Numbness or Tingling:** This may happen if nerves are affected, though it usually resolves as healing progresses.

### **Follow-Up**

Most cases heal within **1-3 weeks**, but the timeline may vary depending on the lesion and your skin type. Contact your clinic for a follow-up if the area doesn't heal as expected or if you have any concerns.

Cryotherapy is a safe and effective way to remove unwanted skin lesions. If you have any questions or concerns about the procedure, please contact us.

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