



**University
Hospitals Sussex**
NHS Foundation Trust

Cryotherapy

Department of Dermatology

Patient information

Why have I been given this information?

You have been given this information because you are having cryotherapy treatment for a skin problem.

What is cryotherapy?

Cryotherapy is a treatment which uses a chemical called liquid nitrogen to destroy skin lesions. A skin lesion is a damaged or diseased area of the skin. Liquid nitrogen is extremely cold and freezes and destroys the lesion. Destroying these skin lesions with cryotherapy allows the cells beneath them to grow as healthy skin where the lesion was before.

What type of skin problems are treated with cryotherapy?

Cryotherapy is good for treating lesions in the top layers of your skin. These include:

- lesions caused by sun-damage
- warty growths
- skin cancers in their early stages.

What should I expect after treatment?

You are likely to experience some discomfort after you have had cryotherapy. You may have:

- redness and swelling of the area within the first 30 minutes after the treatment
- a scab or crust forming. This will fall off eventually leaving normal skin underneath it
- a blister.

How should I look after the area of skin which has been treated with cryotherapy when it is healing?

Do keep the area clean while it is healing. You can cover it with a plaster if you would like to. If you decide not to use a plaster, you can put Vaseline on it.

What should I take for pain caused by my cryotherapy?

Take paracetamol if your wound is painful. Follow the instructions on the packet.

How will I know if I have an infection?

If you have any of these symptoms in the few days after your treatment, you may have an infection:

- increasing pain
- swelling and redness
- generally feeling unwell.

Do contact your GP if you have any of these symptoms as you may need to be treated for an infection.

How might the area of skin where I had my cryotherapy look after it has healed?

You may have a scar. This could be white in colour. Sometimes it may be slightly below the level of the skin around it.

Some people have a scar which is raised above the level of the skin around it, but this is rare. These can be:

- **a keloid scar.** This is when a scar keeps growing and covers a larger area than the original wound.

- **a hypertrophic scar.** This is like a keloid scar but does not cover a larger area than the original wound.

Cryotherapy can also change the usual colouration of your skin layers. This can make your skin look lighter (hypopigmentation) or darker (hyperpigmentation) in the treated area.

Who can I contact if I need further help or information?

If you need further help or information:

Department of Dermatology

University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust,
Department of Dermatology, Brighton General Hospital,
Elm Grove, Brighton BN2 3EW

Note that your query will be passed on to the dermatology nurses who will reply to you as soon as possible.

Phone

01273 665015 or **01273 665030**

Email

bsuh.dermatology@nhs.net

Opening Hours

8:30 am to 5:30 pm

This leaflet is intended for patients receiving care in Brighton & Hove

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