



**University  
Hospitals Sussex**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Curettage and cautery or shave excision

Department of Dermatology

Patient information

## What is this information about?

This information is about a procedure called curettage and cautery or shave excision, which is the removal of a skin lesion. It tells you how to look after your wound after the procedure and what signs and symptoms to look out for.

## What procedure have I had?

You have had treatment to remove a skin lesion either by shaving or scraping.

After this, your wound has been cauterised. This means that heat has been applied to the skin to stop the wound bleeding.

## What should I expect after treatment?

After your procedure, your wound will look like a deep graze or a burn. A crust will form over the wound. After a while a yellow base may also develop under the scab which is normal.

## Will it be painful?

Once the local anaesthetic has worn off you may find that there is a mild discomfort. This is usually helped by taking Paracetamol. Follow the instructions on the packet.

Please **do not** take Ibuprofen or Aspirin because this can increase the risk of bleeding.

## How should I look after the area after treatment?

If we have put a dressing on your wound, this should be removed on the date written above.

## Please do

- ✓ Wash your wound gently with water every day and pat dry.
- ✓ Apply Vaseline to keep the wound moist. Use a new tube or tin to avoid infection. Do this twice a day to help healing.

## Please do not

- ✗ Smoke. This could delay your healing process.
- ✗ Pick off any scab or crust as this may increase the chances of getting a scar.

## What should I do if the wound bleeds?

It is normal to expect some oozing of blood from the wound. If you notice any constant bleeding, apply constant pressure with a clean cloth for 15 to 20 minutes. Keep the pressure on continually. It should eventually stop.

If you cannot stop the bleeding, contact your GP, nearest walk-in centre or A&E department.

## What should I do if I take blood thinning medicines?

This does increase the chances that your wound will bleed.

**Do not** stop taking your medicines unless you have been advised to do so by your health care professional.

## How will I know if I have an infection in my wound?

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

- increasing pain
- swelling and redness. This may be more difficult to see on black or brown skins and could appear as an area of darker skin
- generally feeling unwell.

Do contact your GP straight away if you have any of these symptoms as you may need to be treated with antibiotics.

# How will my skin look after it has healed?

Your skin can look different after treatment. Changes can include:

- **loss of colour in the skin** (hypopigmentation)
- **dark re-pigmentation** at the base of the wound
- **a depressed scar** (a scar that dips inwards)
- **a raised scar (keloid)**: a keloid scar happens when a scar keeps growing and covers a larger area than the original wound. There is a greater chance that you may get a keloid scar if your procedure was on your chest or back or if you have black or brown skin.

Occasionally, the skin lesion may regrow after several months or even years after treatment.

# When will I find out about my biopsy results?

It takes on average two to three weeks for the results to be processed, after which time we will contact you. You will receive a letter with your skin biopsy results, copied to your GP.

If you have not heard from us six weeks after your procedure, please **telephone 01273 665019** or **email [bsuh.dermatology@nhs.net](mailto:bsuh.dermatology@nhs.net)**.

## Opening Hours

8:30 am to 5:30 pm

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

Ref. number: 2346  
Publication date: 03/2024  
Review date: 03/2027

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