

Cryotherapy



What is cryotherapy?

Cryosurgery or cryotherapy is currently widely used to treat many skin lesions. It is a simple and effective treatment and produces good cosmetic results.

This procedure employs liquid nitrogen to freeze and destroy diseased tissue. Freezing times vary but are usually between 5 to 30 seconds, depending on the nature of your lesion. Local anaesthesia is usually not needed unless your lesion is large or requires a longer freeze time.

The following are some conditions that can be effectively treated by cryosurgery:

- Solar (actinic) keratoses
- Seborrhoeic keratoses
- Warts
- Lentigines
- Milia
- Skin tags
- Benign fleshy moles
- Haemangioma
- Pyogenic granuloma





Advice following cryotherapy

Although this is a simple and quick procedure, some common side effects may occur following cryosurgery. These include:

Pain

You may feel a burning sensation during freezing, and this may continue for a short time afterwards, but it usually settles within a few minutes. This pain should usually ultimately resolve within 24 hours. Headache may occur, especially with cryosurgery to the forehead or scalp. If you get pain later, aspirin or paracetamol can readily relieve it.

Swelling and Redness

After surgery, the treated area may swell or become red. It may also weep. A dry dressing is necessary if this occurs. Sometimes the doctor will prescribe specific dressings for you.

Blister Formation

A blister may form over the treated area in a day or two. Do not burst when it forms. However, if the blister bursts, it may need to be covered with a dressing. Sometimes, the blister may take the form of a blood blister. This may look worrying, but it can be readily treated. If you have cause for concern, please get in touch with the clinic.

Infection

Persistent pain and swelling may indicate the presence of an infection. If this occurs, a course of antibiotics may need to be prescribed by your doctor.

Pigmentation Changes

The periphery around the treated area may appear darker than normal, but this is usually transient. However, in some patients, especially those with tanned or darker skin, the treated area may become lighter in colour, which may be permanent.

Following cryosurgery, the wound may form a hard, dry, black, adherent scab after 10-14 days. However, it may be from a week to a month or more before it separates to leave a pink scar that ultimately becomes pale.

If problems arise with your cryosurgery, please get in touch with your doctor for advice. A follow-up appointment will be scheduled for you to return to the clinic for your doctor to check that the lesion has been adequately treated.

