

Are there any side effects?

If the treated area becomes red, swollen or painful after the pigmentation of the skin (lightening or darkening) which can be permanent- this is more likely to happen in dark-skinned people. Numbness at the treatment site may occur and take some months to recover. Scarring is a rare complication.

Do not hesitate to ask the doctor or nurse if you have any questions.

N.B. We no longer provide treatment for wart's or verruca's at the skin Clinic with Liquid Nitrogen. Please see separate advice leaflet for Self Treatment of these.

Thank you for taking the time to read this leaflet, we hope you have found it helpful and informative.

If you have any suggestions please send them to our PPG (Patient Participation Group) at:

**Academy Medical Centre
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Academy Medical Centre

Patient Information Leaflet No 11

Cryotherapy (Skin Clinic)



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The aim of this leaflet is to answer some questions you may have about Cryotherapy

What is Cryotherapy?

Cryotherapy is the treatment of skin lesions by freezing. Liquid Nitrogen is the agent normally used for this. Nitrogen is a gas that makes up most of the air we breathe, but when cooled to a very low temperature it becomes a liquid. This treatment is widely used for removal of many types of benign (non cancerous) skin conditions such as warts and skin tags. Treatment is quick and often removes the need for skin surgery.



What will happen?

Liquid nitrogen can be applied either with a cotton bud or by using a spray. The spray achieves a lower temperature, and may work better for thicker lesions, although either method is effective for most lesions that we treat.

The treatment does produce a painful burning sensation at the time of application. However, this only lasts a few minutes. Most people can tolerate this but for young children other treatment is available.



How does it work?

The treatment works by causing ice formation within the lesion, which together with chemical and vascular changes, leads to destruction of the area treated. An immune reaction triggered by this inflammation may also be important for clearance. New skin then grows in from underneath and around the treated area.

Some skin lesions respond better than others, and it is difficult to predict the success rate at the first treatment. Sometimes, one treatment is sufficient to clear the skin problem, but it is not unusual for two or more treatment sessions to be required. Occasionally Cryotherapy is unsuccessful.

For the treatment to be effective, it is important that the entire lesion is frozen, along with a small rim of normal surrounding skin. Usually one freeze is sufficient for each lesion, but for thicker lesion a second freeze may be applied after the initial treatment has thawed.

The treated area will initially become red and swollen, and occasionally a blister will develop. It is not normally possible to predict who might blister, but if this does develop, it can be burst with a sterile needle to release the fluid and a clean dressing applied. Over the next few days, the treated area will scab over, may darken in colour, and will gradually separate from the skin. For best results allow the scab to come off itself, rather than picking it. Healing normally takes about a week.