



Liquid Nitrogen “Cryotherapy” Therapy

What is Cryotherapy?

Cryotherapy is the technique of freezing a skin lesion to kill any abnormal or cancerous cells. Liquid Nitrogen is applied to the lesion for a few seconds and the affected cells freeze resulting in the destruction of the skin growth. Sometimes more than one freeze/thaw cycle is required at the time of treatment. In some cases you may be required to return at a later date for a second and/or third treatment. Liquid Nitrogen is a gas which liquefies at an extremely cold temperature. The cold liquid is used to destroy skin cancers, pre-cancerous lesions, warts and other skin growths.



What can I expect with Cryotherapy?

The procedure is slightly painful, however the pain (often described as a 'stinging' sensation) generally resolves quickly. The treated skin will initially become red then a blister may appear on the treated site within a few minutes or several hours. It will then become a crust and a scab, which will eventually lift. The time it takes to heal varies, but is usually within 5 - 10 days, with the face being the quickest area to heal.

How to look after the treated area:

- Keep the treated areas dry for 12 - 24 hours.
- Consider covering the lesions with paraffin or similar occlusion ointment.
- Leave blisters intact unless they are very uncomfortable, in which case you can pierce with a sterile needle.
- The wound can be protected with a non-adherent dressing if necessary.
- Ensure a zinc-based sunblock is used over all areas of skin exposed to the sun. Do not apply to broken skin or the treated areas until they are fully healed.

Complications:

Complications are uncommon. If the area becomes infected you will need treatment with antibiotics. If you notice any signs of infection such as heat, redness, swelling or an increase in pain, please contact the clinic where you were treated immediately.

The wound usually resolves with a flat area of the skin which is sometimes different in colour from the surrounding skin, usually lighter. Deep scarring is rare.

For further information contact your Skin Cancer Doctor for advice or review of any lesions of concern.