

PATIENT INFORMATION

Planned Skin Surgery

Dermatology Clinic

You have been put on the waiting list for skin surgery and so you may find the following information helpful.

If, for whatever reason, you are unable to attend your appointment, please phone: Appointments Secretary 01803 656544

On the day of your operation:

1. You are allowed to eat & drink.
2. Please bring with you your up-to-date list of medicines. If you take **Warfarin** then you need to arrange an **INR** blood test with your GP surgery 1-2 days before your skin surgery. If the level is 3, or more, then surgery will need to be postponed (contact us on the above number). If you take an **Anti-coagulant** (such as **Rivaroxaban, Dabigatran, Apixaban, or Edoxaban**) please continue this, unless your consultant has advised you otherwise.
3. Skin surgery is done using local anaesthetic to numb the skin. The anaesthetic injection may be painful, but its effect is rapid and it completely numbs the area for the length of your operation.
4. If you are particularly worried about any aspect of your surgery, do not be embarrassed to share your feelings. Please contact the Dermatology Specialist Nurse (01803 656153) before your appointment, who will be able to chat things through with you.
5. Your procedure may take up to 30mins for a biopsy or curette (scrape) and up to 90 mins if a skin lesion needs to be excised (cut out), depending on the size and location of the lesion. It is difficult to predict the length of complicated procedures and so appointments often run late - please bring a book with you.
6. We advise you not to drive yourself to and from the hospital, but would prefer you to have someone bring you in and accompany you.
7. The procedure will take place in an operating theatre or procedure room. Relatives and Carers will only be allowed in the operating room under special circumstances. Please discuss this with the nurse on the day of your procedure.

8. Smoking delays wound healing and so we advise that you stop smoking 48hrs before your procedure and for at least 48hrs afterwards. Please discuss this with your GP surgery if you need help.
9. We advise you to take a bath or shower on the day of your surgery, or the evening before.
10. If your surgery is on, or near, your hands then please remove any rings prior to your appointment. This is because finger swelling can occur after surgery and in extreme cases a ring can threaten the blood supply.

Before signing a consent form for your procedure, we ask you to consider the following potential complications:

- There is a small risk of infection with any surgical procedure. We minimise this risk by using antiseptic cleansers and careful technique.
- Bleeding during and after the procedure. Please let us know if you take any medication which may prolong bleeding. By the end of your procedure we will have stopped any bleeding and, before you leave, we will explain to you how you can look after the wound to avoid any oozing or bleeding during the healing period – see below.
- The area is numbed with a very effective local anaesthetic (lidocaine) before your procedure. This injection can be quite painful, but it works very quickly and will last well beyond the length of your operation so that you won't feel any of the surgery. It usually wears off after a few hours.
- There will be a scar after the area has healed. The size of the scar will depend on your procedure and the site of the lesion. This will be discussed with you at your surgery appointment.

Usually, it is not possible to guarantee that a lesion has been completely removed until we receive the pathology report following examination of the sample under the microscope.

If you have any questions regarding the above, please contact the Specialist Nurse on **01803 656153**.

Before you leave the department on the day of your procedure, you will be given clear instructions as to how to look after your wound. Here are some points to consider in advance:

1. We suggest using Vaseline to assist in wound care. Buy a small, clean pot in preparation.
2. We recommend that you avoid soaking wounds in a bath or going swimming until the stitches have been removed.
3. Areas such as the back, legs or feet take longer to heal. Avoid strenuous exercise for 4-6 weeks following the procedure.
4. Local anaesthetic usually works for 2-3 hours. Following this you may experience some discomfort. Have some paracetamol, or your favoured pain-killer, available.
5. If your procedure requires stitches, then you will be given clear information before you leave, advising you on wound care and when to arrange for your GP Surgery's Practice Nurse to remove the stitches. **Please ensure that you aren't away on holiday for up to 2 weeks following your procedure.**

Biopsy:

A small (4mm or 6mm) piece of skin is removed, not including any deeper tissues. A stitch, or two, is inserted afterwards to close the gap which will leave a small straight line scar. Your surgery nurse will be able to remove the stitch after 1-2 weeks.

Curettage & cautery:

Curettage means the lesion will be scooped off the surface without involving deep tissues. The raw area left behind is then cauterised with an electric current that seals the blood vessels on the surface and stops bleeding. No stitches are involved and the area heals like a skin graze.

Excision:

If you are booked to have an “excision” (removal of a skin lesion by cutting it out) then your scar will be longer than the lesion being removed.

For example:

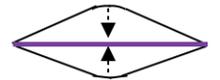
If your skin lesion is like this.....



the surgeon will need to remove a border of normal skin around it, like this...



To take tension out of the stitches and make the scar stronger the area to be removed is made into an ellipse shape, like this.....



So your scar will end up like this.....



For further assistance or to receive this information in a different format, please contact the department which created this leaflet.

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