

Notes

Use the space below to write down any questions you might have or to make notes.

Further information and help

For further information please contact:

Angela Woodley
Dermatology Liaison Nurse
Outpatients Department, Western Isles
Hospital, MacAulay Road, Stornoway, Isle
of Lewis, HS1 2AF
Tel: 01851 704704 ext 2252
E-mail: angela.woodley@nhs.scot

If you experience any serious symptoms out of hours please contact NHS24 freephone: 111

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- speak to a member of staff
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- tel. 01851 708069 or 07814 071868 Monday-Friday between 9am-5.30pm.

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Bòrd SSN nan Eilean Siar
NHS Western Isles

Outpatients Department

Cryotherapy



Patient information leaflet

What is meant by 'Cryotherapy'?

The term 'Cryotherapy' literally means 'treatment using low temperature' and refers to the removal of skin lesions by freezing them.

In the Western Isles Hospital we use Cryoderm spray to do this.

What conditions can be treated with Cryotherapy?

A wide variety of superficial benign lesions can be treated with Cryotherapy, but it is most commonly used to remove actinic keratoses (an area of sun-damaged skin), viral warts, verrucae and other skin problems.

What does the procedure involve?

Cryoderm spray is applied to the skin by using a spray or a cotton bud. The procedure itself lasts a matter of seconds; the precise time depending on the thickness and size of the lesion.

The frozen skin becomes white and takes a short time to thaw to normal skin temperature. This freeze-thaw cycle is usually repeated. You may need to attend several treatments on a monthly or fortnightly basis.

How should the treated area be cared for?

Usually it is best to keep the area dry and uncovered but you will be given specific care instructions at your appointment.

What are the side effects of this treatment?

Immediate side effects may include:

Pain

Cryotherapy is usually well tolerated but can sometimes be painful. This discomfort can occur both at the time of treatment and for a short time thereafter. Painkillers (such as paracetamol) taken for the first 24 hours may relieve discomfort.

Swelling and redness

This is a normal immediate response to freezing the skin and usually settles after two to three days. Your nurse may apply a steroid ointment to the treated area to reduce this.

For a short while the treated area may ooze a little.

Cryotherapy close to the eyes may induce prominent puffiness of the lower eyelids which settles within days.

Blistering

This is also a common consequence of Cryotherapy and blisters settle after a few days as the scab forms.

Some people blister more easily than others and the development of blisters does not necessarily mean that the skin has been frozen too much.

Occasionally the blisters may become filled with blood; this is harmless.

Pigmentation changes

The skin at and around the treatment site may lighten or darken in colour, especially in dark-skinned people. This usually improves with time but may be permanent.

There is always the possibility that the treatment may not be effective or the condition may recur.

Where can I get more information about Cryotherapy?

For further information about Cryotherapy please visit:

<http://dermnetnz.org/procedures/cryotherapy.html>