

Notes

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

Further information and help

For further information contact:

Sarah Mitchell
Dermatology Liaison Nurse
Outpatients Department
Western Isles Hospital
Tel: 01851 708215
E-mail: sarah.mitchell15@nhs.scot

Opening hours: Mon-Fri 9am-5pm



Bòrd SSN nan Eilean Siar
NHS Western Isles

Outpatients Department

We are listening - how did we do?

We welcome your feedback, as it helps us evaluate the services we provide. If you would like to tell us about your experience:



- speak to a member of staff
- visit our website: www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/feedback or share your story at: www.careopinion.org.uk or tel. 0800 1223135
- tel. 01851 704704 (ext 2236)
Monday-Friday between 10am-4pm.

Version: 6 Review Date: May 2027
Written by: Dermatology Specialist Nurse, Western Isles Hospital.

Disclaimer

The content of this leaflet is intended to augment, not replace, information provided by your clinician. It is not intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Reading this information does not create or replace a doctor-patient relationship or consultation. If required, please contact your doctor or other health care provider to assist you to interpret any of this information, or in applying the information to your individual needs.

© NHS Western Isles, 2013, 2015, 2018, 2019, 2021, 2025.
All rights reserved.

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>