

Care of the Skin after Cryotherapy

Cryotherapy (targeted tissue freezing) is a common treatment for skin conditions such as actinic keratoses, seborrheic keratoses and warts. The liquid nitrogen is delivered from pressurised cryotherapy canisters.

There may be mild to moderate discomfort at the start of treatment, but it decreases within a few seconds once the skin surface is frozen. Minor discomfort following the treatment is common and is usually relieved with pain medications such as Paracetamol.

Treated areas will initially become red and swollen, and then dark red/brown or scab-like. Often a blister will form, which may contain dark fluid. Over a period of several weeks new skin will form at the base of the wound, and the layers that were frozen will gradually peel off.

Healing time can vary from a few days to multiple weeks depending on the depth of freezing that was applied, as well as location and size of the treated area.

Wash treated areas on a daily basis with a mild cleanser (QV wash, Cetaphil cleanser, or Dove soap) to gently remove any loose scab or crust.

Blisters are best left to settle on their own. If the blisters are large or intolerable, they can be lanced with a sterile needle and covered for protection. Keep the treated area moist by applying a clean greasy ointment (Vaseline or Paw Paw ointment).

Most treatment sites do well without a dressing as long as ointment is applied several times throughout the day. You may bathe, swim, exercise and otherwise follow all of your normal activities.

True scarring is rare after cryosurgery but treated areas may be slightly paler than surrounding skin after they heal.

Infections after cryosurgery are very uncommon, but they do occur. If a treated area becomes increasingly red and painful or discharges pus, please contact us on the Skin Wise Healthcare clinic number 08 8230 6999.