

**Patient  
Information**

# Cryotherapy

## Introduction

This leaflet is intended for patients who have had treatment with liquid nitrogen in a Dermatology Clinic. It will advise you on what to expect after the procedure and how to care for the area treated.

## What is cryotherapy?

Cryotherapy treatment is a carefully controlled cold burn with liquid nitrogen from a canister. This is used to treat areas of sun damaged and warty areas on the skin. Slow growing skin cancers such as basal cell carcinoma are also treated with cryotherapy. Local anaesthetic is not needed for this procedure as freezing itself has some local anaesthetic effect.

## What are the after effects?

You may have some soreness or mild pain to the treated area of skin. This will depend on the length of the freeze and the area being treated. Pain relief such as paracetamol can be taken to reduce any discomfort if needed.

After treatment you will notice a slight redness and swelling to the treated area. The swelling may be more noticeable in areas where the skin is stretched or loose, such as around the eyes. These changes will usually only last for a few days.

A water (or blood) blister may form on people whose skin is thin and sensitive. Fluid can leak from the blister. If a blister does form and is painful, you can let the fluid out with needle that has been sterilised in heat or boiling water. Repeat this until the blister no longer refills.

## How should I look after the treated skin?

Keep the area dry for a day or two and allow the air to it if possible. To protect the area apply Vaseline® from a clean, new pot. This should be done twice daily and always before washing.

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If it is necessary to protect the treated area from dust or rubbing on clothes, for example when at work, a dry dressing can be used. The dressing must be one that allows the air to get in.

A waterproof plaster must not be used.

A crust or scale may form over the treated area.

This will lift off the skin naturally over 10 to 14 days. If you have any concerns regarding the healing of your treated skin then contact your GP for advice.

## Further information

### Patient Info

Website: [www.patient.co.uk/health/liquid-nitrogen-treatment](http://www.patient.co.uk/health/liquid-nitrogen-treatment)

### DermNet NZ

Website: [www.dermnetnz.org/procedures/cryotherapy](http://www.dermnetnz.org/procedures/cryotherapy)

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