

ADVICE FOR PATIENTS HAVING SKIN SURGERY

1. A surgical procedure has been arranged for you. This will be carried out under local anaesthetic, which means a small injection to numb only the area of the skin lesion to be removed. You may eat and drink as normal. Where possible, please bring someone with you or arrange a lift, and avoid driving, particularly if your procedure is on the leg. The local anaesthetic lasts a few hours, after which you may require some Paracetamol. Avoid Ibuprofen or additional Aspirin as these may cause some bleeding.
2. Your procedure may be one of the following:
 - a) **Ellipse Excisional Biopsy:** your skin lesion is fully cut out and stitches are required, leaving a scar line that is longer than your original lesion.
 - b) **Curettage and Cautery:** the lesion is scraped off and the base of the wound cauterised to seal it.
 - c) **Shave Excision and Cautery:** the lesion is shaved off flush with the skin and the base cauterised.

Both b) and c) do not require stitches, but instead you will have a brown/black scab that will fall off within a few weeks as it heals, to leave a pale scar. All skin samples are sent for analysis.

3. There is a small risk your wound may bleed any time within the first 2 days after your procedure. If this appears excessive, press firmly for 10-15 minutes and elevate if upon an arm or leg. Change the dressing if necessary. If bleeding persists contact us, or your GP, or NHS Direct if out of hours. If you have a wound on the face or near the eye, it is better to sleep with an extra pillow, to help reduce any swelling. Procedures done on the face or around the eye may be bruised and swollen for several days.
4. Keep your wound clean and dry for 48 hours, after which you may remove or change the dressing and shower as normal. If by this time your wound is not completely dry, you should reapply a dressing, changing at regular intervals, and also if the dressing becomes wet or soiled. Continue until the stitches are removed. If you have a cauterised wound you may moisturise this with Vaseline after a week to help soften the scab until it falls off.
5. You are advised not to carry out any strenuous activity, heavy lifting or swimming, and if your wound is on the leg take care with driving until your wound is healed and stitches removed, and ideally for a further 2 weeks after, to help regain the tissue strength.
6. Rarely the wound may come apart or become infected. Stitched wounds upon the leg or back or near joints are particularly vulnerable. Signs of infection are a red/hot/swollen/painful/discharging wound. Please contact us or your GP if you have any concerns.
7. If you have stitches these are either dissolving (within several weeks), or need to be removed in either 1 week (head and neck) or 2 weeks (everywhere else). The doctor will discuss/choose the option best suited for your lesion and its location and if your stitches need removing, or if your doctor arranges to see you again at her request, the appointment for this has been scheduled below, and incurs no extra cost.
8. Scars can be improved by massaging the wound 2-3 weeks after your operation. Use Vaseline to do this morning and evening. Don't expose your wound to direct sunlight for 12 months as this can cause permanent discoloration and prevent the scar from fading. Use sunblock whenever possible.

You have been givenstitches that need to be removed indays time or
Your doctor has requested to see you for a follow up.

Your appointment for this is on.....at.....
here at the clinic. Please arrive 10 minutes before your scheduled time.