



York and Scarborough
Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Cryotherapy

Information for patients, relatives and carers

① For more information, please contact:

Dermatology Department on one of the following
telephone numbers:

York Patients: 01904 726629

The York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE

Scarborough Patients: 01723 368111

Scarborough Hospital, Woodlands Drive, Scarborough,
YO12 6QL

Selby Patients: 01904 724296

The New Selby War Memorial Hospital, Doncaster
Road, Selby, YO8 9BX

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What is Cryotherapy?

Cryotherapy is freezing with a substance called liquid nitrogen. This treatment can be used to treat a number of different skin problems e.g. warts, verrucae, skin tags and sun damage lesions.

What happens at my first appointment?

You will be seen by one of the doctors in the Dermatology Clinic where your first treatment will be given. The doctor will prescribe follow-up treatments if required by either a doctor or a nurse.

How long will my treatment take?

The doctor will determine the length of time of your treatment. The treatment itself only takes a few seconds.

Thicker lesions particularly plantar warts (verrucae) may need soaking and the removal of any hard skin before the treatment. A nurse will discuss this with you if this is needed.

How often will I have to come to clinic?

Some lesions can be treated with a single freeze but others need to be frozen many times. However, the average number of treatments to clear a viral wart e.g. from the hands is about five. Treatments are carried out every two to three weeks. Some skin problems especially sun damage may need multiple treatments. It is possible the treatment may not be successful.

How is the treatment carried out?

Cryotherapy is carried out with a cotton wood bud dipped in liquid nitrogen or with a spray gun.

Are there any side effects?

Cryotherapy can be painful, although the procedure is very quick, the discomfort can last up to ten minutes, in some cases this can be longer. It is common for some swelling to develop and this usually lasts several days. As with any procedure there is small risk of infection.

If a blister forms, we advise you to gently clean the surface of the blood blister. Then prick it with a sterile needle and squeeze out the clear fluid or blood. A dressing can be applied and changed each day after washing the healing blister.

Blisters are more common on sun-damaged skin. Lesions treated on the leg may take several weeks to heal.

Very rarely after prolonged treatments you may experience some numbness in the area. You can also develop areas of lightening of your skin and in very rare cases, some scarring may develop.

Is there anything I can do to help?

You may be prescribed a cream by the doctor to apply daily for two to three days after freezing. This can sometimes help reduce the swelling and discomfort.

If you have any worries, concerns or questions about your treatment please contact the dermatology department: contact details are on the front of this leaflet.

You can also contact your GP.

Tell us what you think of this leaflet

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact: Lois Alderson- Sister, Dermatology Department, The York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE or telephone 01904 726621.

Teaching, training and research

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email pals@york.nhs.uk.

An answer phone is available out of hours.

Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

Please telephone or email if you require this information in a different language or format, for example Braille, large print or audio.

如果你要求本資 不同的 或 式提供，電
或發電

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