



Harrow  
Health



## Minor Surgery Patient Information Leaflet 2024/2025

Dear Patient,

You have been referred to undergo a minor surgical procedure.

This typically involves the removal of a skin lesion or cyst, or biopsy of a lesion that we are not sure about.

The GP Surgeon will discuss the nature of the procedure, options and associated risks and benefits beforehand. The GP surgeon will usually only undertake the procedure that has been asked of them by the dermatologist that you have seen and will not undertake any extra procedures.

To remove a skin lesion requires a cut to the skin and subsequent wound, which then has to heal, leaving a scar.

Sometimes, as an alternative, the lesion may be treated with a chemical called liquid nitrogen, this is called *Cryotherapy*. Liquid nitrogen is extremely cold and freezes the lesion.

You will be informed of postoperative wound care. If stitches are used you will be asked to make an appointment with your GP Surgery nurse at the appropriate time to have them removed, unless they are dissolvable stitches that do not require removal.

Where deeper stitches are used, they are usually dissolvable and they lie under the wound and so are not visible.

### **How long will the surgery take?**

Depending on the complexity of the surgical procedure and the site of the lesion, surgery can take from around 15 minutes to 45 minutes, or in some cases we may have to book you a follow-up appointment to continue with the minor procedure.

As far as possible we endeavour to run to time, however in unavoidable circumstances where there is a delay, we will inform you.

Please leave plenty of time on the day, as just one unexpectedly complex patient can delay the surgeon, and the whole list can run late.

### **Pre-Operative Advice**

- Please wear appropriate clothing
- You may bring a friend or relative if necessary
- Please wash on the day of your operation
- Do not shave the area
- Eat your normal breakfast on the day of the operation
- Do not stop any medication especially those to thin your blood e.g. Aspirin, Clopidogrel, Dipyridamole or Warfarin, unless specifically instructed to do so by the GP Surgeon.
- Most people can drive following surgery

### **Please inform the GP Surgeon if you:**

- Have any known allergies especially to anaesthetics
- Have a pacemaker or similar implanted device
- Have any metalwork or joint replacements
- Have problems with lying flat for up to thirty minutes
- Have problems with wound healing or suffer with any medical conditions that may affect the wound e.g. Diabetes or Rheumatoid Arthritis
- Would prefer a chaperone

### **Think something has gone wrong?**

**Inflammation:** Redness around the wound margin/ stitches is normal and part of healing. Typically settles in around 5 days.

**Infection:** If you have any worsening swelling and redness after the operation or green/ yellow discharge then you may have an infection. Please contact your GP Surgery. During Out of Hours Service call 111. You do not always require antibiotics for a mild infection.

**Bleeding:** A small amount of bleeding is common after the procedure. 10 – 15 minutes of applying direct pressure is usually sufficient to stop any bleeding. Elevation of the affected area if possible is also helpful. If it continues after 15 minutes, please contact your GP Surgeon or 111 as above.

**Fainting:** If you feel sick or faint following the procedure please advise the GP Surgeon who will treat you, typically by lying you down and raising your legs. You may need a period of observation before going home.

**Anaesthetic:** Allergies to anaesthetics is rare, however please advise the GP Surgeon if you have had a previous reaction.

Sometimes Adrenaline is used in addition to the local anaesthetic. This can cause palpitations (heart racing). We can exclude the adrenaline if this has happened before. If it occurs it is likely to wear off after a few minutes, and you may need a period of observation before going home.

**Scarring:** Scarring is inevitable after any minor surgery procedure. Occasionally thick scars can occur (keloid scars) as a result of your individual tendency to form scar tissue. Certain areas of the body are more likely to form keloid scars (front of the chest, upper arms and back).

**Nerve damage:** If a large area of skin is removed, small nerves can be cut which causes numbness and sometimes pins and needles. In most cases this settles with time but can leave a numb area around the scar.

### **Wound Care Information**

Here is some information to help you to continue to manage your wound healing.

If your wound has a dressing, keep this clean and dry for 48 hours.

You can wash after 24h hours, but please ensure you dab the wound dry afterwards. If the dressing comes off, please apply another dressing for 24 hours.

If your wound no longer requires a dressing, keep clean and dry.

Allow water to wash over this gently, no direct high-pressure water to the wound until fully healed.

And do not directly rub or wash with perfumed soaps or moisturizers until fully healed. When drying the wound, dab gently, do not rub with any pressure.

After 48 hours please apply antiseptic cream such as Savlon cream and Vaseline to keep the wound moist. This helps the healing process.

If your wound shows signs of infection, please see the nurse at your GP surgery as soon as possible. Signs of infection include pain, heat, swelling, redness and offensive smell, thick yellow or discoloured discharge around the wound site. And if you are feeling unwell in yourself

If you are prescribed antibiotics at any time if clinically needed for the wound, take as prescribed and ensure you finish the course.

Once your wound is fully healed, and has been for at least 1 week, if needed continue using Vaseline until the wound has healed completely.

Avoid swimming with all wounds, due to risk of infection and delayed wound healing. Once wounds have been healed for 4 weeks (dependent on the wound) this can be considered, ensuring healed wounds are dried carefully after.

If you have any concerns or problems, please do not hesitate to contact Harrow Health by calling on 0208 866 4100 or by emailing [Harhl.Dermatology@nhs.net](mailto:Harhl.Dermatology@nhs.net)