

Skin Excision

What is a skin excision?

A skin excision is a technique to remove a skin lesion with a margin of normal surrounding skin to make sure the whole lesion is removed. A scalpel is used to remove an ellipse of skin typically at least 3 times the diameter of the lesion. Usually the skin is closed from side to side with internal dissolvable sutures and surface sutures that may either be dissolvable or non-dissolvable.

What it used for?

Excisions are used to remove lesions such as suspicious moles and skin cancers.

Does it hurt?

Excisions are carried out under a local anaesthetic, an injection into the skin that numbs the area. You may have had local anaesthetic before a dental procedure. The anaesthetic stings whilst it is being injected and then you should feel no pain. If you have ever experienced problems before with local anaesthetic please inform the doctor.

Do I need to stop my blood thinning medication?

If you take blood thinning medication such as Aspirin, Warfarin or Clopidogrel, a decision will be made whether these need to be stopped, reduced or continued based on the procedure required and the necessity to keep the blood thin. Discuss this with the doctor at the planning appointment.

Does it leave a scar?

Yes. All surgical procedures will leave a mark in the skin. This is usually slightly pink line to start with and will fade to leave a white line. This may be slightly lumpy but flattens over the first few months. Rarely a thickened scar (keloid) may form. If you have had previous problems with scars please inform the doctor.

Do I need to do anything after the procedure?

The anaesthetic will last a couple of hours. There may be some pain after this and taking paracetamol before the anaesthetic wears off, and regularly for the first day, may help.

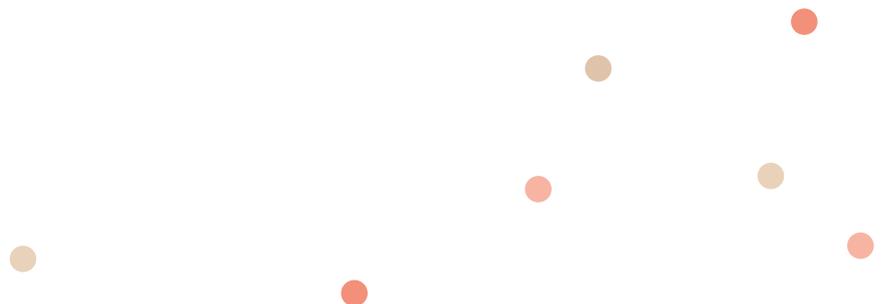
A dressing is normally used to cover the wound and it is best for this to stay in place until suture removal. Depending on the site of the operation you may need to rest, avoid exercise and heavy lifting for a couple of weeks after the procedure.

What happens to the sutures?

If you have non-dissolvable surface sutures these will need to be removed 7-14 days after the procedure. This can either be arranged with the nurses at the private hospital or with your local practice nurse, but this will need to be booked with your general practice.

How long does it take for results to come back?

Results take 1 week for routine excisions. If special stains are required this may take a further week.



How do I know if the wound is infected?

It is unlikely that the wound will become infected. Less than 1 in 20 wounds will have any problems. Signs of infection include redness in the surrounding skin, the wound becoming very tender a few days after surgery, or the wound discharging blood stained or pus stained fluid. You will need medical assistance and antibiotics. Please contact the hospital and the nurses will arrange a clinical review.



A margin of skin is marked around the lesion to make sure it is completely removed.



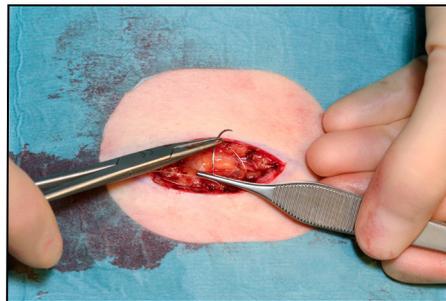
Local anaesthetic is injected around the entire lesion to make the skin numb.



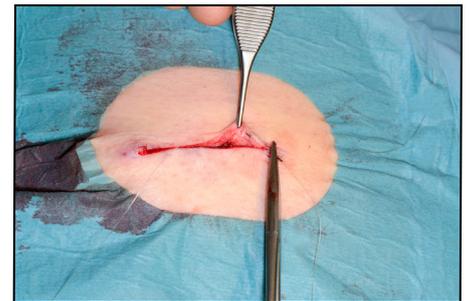
The area is cut out using a scalpel.



Any bleeding points are treated with an electro-cautery device.



Deep dissolvable sutures are used to bring the edges together and take away tension from the surface..



Either a dissolvable suture (shown here) or surface sutures are used to bring the surface neatly together.



The wound is dressed with steri-strips, to provide some direct pressure, extra strength and stability to the area.



The area is covered with a shower proof dressing.

