

## Cryotherapy

### What is cryotherapy?

Cryotherapy is a technique used to freeze the skin causing localised tissue destruction to the top layers of the skin - a controlled frostbite! In medical practice liquid nitrogen is used. This is not the same as the freezing preparation available over the counter at the pharmacy.

### What is it used for?

Cryotherapy is used to treat superficial skin lesions such as areas of sun damage (actinic keratoses and solar lentigo), viral warts, seborrhoeic keratoses and pre-cancerous and superficial skin cancers.

### What should I expect after treatment?

It is normal to experience some discomfort following cryotherapy. The surrounding tissue may become red and swollen. A blister may form and the skin may weep. A scab or crust may form, which will eventually fall off leaving normal skin underneath. This may take up to two weeks. During this time the wound should be kept clean.

Simple painkillers such as paracetamol may be required. If the surrounding skin becomes red and very tender a few days after the procedure this may indicate a localised skin infection, requiring treatment.

### Will it leave a mark?

It is common for a white mark to be left at the site of cryotherapy. Rarely a thickened or raised scar may form. Inform the doctor if you have experienced previous problems with wound healing.

