

Patient information

Skin Surgery

Dermatology Department

The doctor or nurse specialist you saw will have explained the type of surgery you need to have.

What is skin surgery?

Skin surgery is when a sample of your skin is taken or when a mole or a skin growth is removed under local anaesthetic. You may have some stitches to close your wound.

What are the benefits of skin surgery?

The skin sample is sent for testing to help get a diagnosis. Depending on the procedure it may also remove the lesion as well.

What are the risks of having skin surgery?

In the majority of cases, there are no complications or long-term side effects. However, you should be aware there are possible risks:

- **Infection**

Occasionally the wound can become infected. The signs and symptoms of infection are pain, swelling and redness of the area. If this happens you should contact your family doctor (GP) or the Dermatology Clinic. Your wound should be checked, as you may need a course of antibiotics or other treatment.

- **Bleeding**

Occasionally after you have left the hospital, a wound may start to bleed. Applying pressure with your fingers over a dressing for ten to twenty minutes can stop most bleeding. If the affected area is your arm or leg, then keeping it raised will also help. If these simple measures do not stop the bleeding, you should contact the Dermatology Clinic during normal working hours (9am to 5pm) Monday to Friday. Alternatively, if bleeding does not stop after 5pm or at a weekend please attend your nearest Accident and Emergency Department.

- **Bruising**

Bleeding can occur in the local soft tissue surrounding the area of surgery; it is usually a purple red colour and occurs as results of temporary damage to small blood vessels during the procedure. Bruising may be worse if you are taking blood thinning medication such as aspirin. The effects of bruising will be temporary.

- **Pain**
During injection of the local anaesthetic a degree of pain will be experienced for a few seconds or for a few minutes depending on the size of the area being numbed. The area will be numb for one to two hours. You may feel pain after the local anaesthetic wears off.
- **Ulceration**
Occasionally if a wound becomes infected after surgery or the wound is traumatised the wound will be slow to heal.
- **Regrowth of lesion**
Certain types of lesion can regrow after some procedures such as shave or curettage. Your health care professional will inform you if the lesion is benign or malignant once the report is received from the lab.
- **Scarring**
It is impossible to perform surgery on the skin without leaving any mark. We take care to lessen any surgical scar. Usually, scars fade with time, but it can up to 12 months to settle. Massaging the wound after four weeks from the day of surgery helps healing. This should be done with a new pot of petroleum jelly (e.g., Vaseline) twice daily for three minutes.

Are there any alternatives to surgery?

There are alternative treatments available. You will need to discuss with your doctor to find out if any are suitable for you.

What will happen if I do not have any treatment?

Your lesion may increase in size and we will not be able to find the cause of your lesion, which may be serious.

What sort of anaesthetic will be given to me?

Skin surgery will be done under local anaesthetic, which will be injected into your skin so it will go numb. Local anaesthetics are generally very safe and serious problems are rare. You may have some discomfort from the injection, a tingling sensation when the medication wears off and possibly some minor bruising, bleeding or soreness at the injection site.

Some people do experience dizziness, headaches, blurred vision, twitching muscles, continuing numbness or pins and needles. These problems will usually pass but you should tell the healthcare professional in charge if you experience any.

In very rare, circumstances you may have an allergic reaction to the local anaesthetic which can be serious or life-threatening.

The risk of anaesthetic and surgery are lower for those who are undergoing minor surgery and who are young, fit, active and well. For more information, please ask for a copy of the Royal College of Anaesthetists Patient Information.

Important:

If you are diagnosed with any of the following conditions, or you take any of the medications listed below, please ensure you have informed the Doctor or Nurse that assessed you and the clinician performing your procedure on the day.

- ❖ **Diabetes**
- ❖ **Antiplatelet therapy:**
 - Aspirin
 - Clopidogrel (Plavix)
 - Prasugrel (Efient)
 - Ticagrelor (Brilique)
 - Dipyridamole (Persantin) and aspirin
- ❖ **Anticoagulants:**
 - Warfarin (INR reading required prior to surgery)
 - Heparin/Low molecular weight heparin including enoxaparin/dalteparin.
 - Dabigatran
 - Rivaroxiban
 - Sinthrome
 - Apixaban
 - Fondaparinux
 - Edoxaban
- ❖ **Are on dialysis**
- ❖ **Have suffered a heart attack within the last three months**
- ❖ **Have a pacemaker or ICD (Implantable cardio defibrillator)**
- ❖ **Have any allergies especially to medications**
- ❖ **Are possibly pregnant or breastfeeding**
- ❖ **Have any infections such as Hepatitis or HIV.**

Getting ready for your surgery

- You may eat and drink normally before your surgery. Take your regular medication unless the doctor has told you otherwise.
- You must remove all metal jewellery (a wedding ring is acceptable).
- If your surgery is on your face or neck you must not wear any make-up.
- On the day of your surgery, please try to bring someone with you. This is especially important if you are not mobile or the surgery is near to your eye as the dressing may block your vision afterwards.
- If you wish to drive to the hospital, please check first with a member of nursing staff to find out whether this would be advisable.
- Unfortunately, relatives are not allowed into the operating theatres.

The day of your surgery

A doctor or the nurse specialist in the dermatology department will perform your surgery. It will be done under local anaesthetic, which is injected under your skin around your operation site. This causes a stinging sensation that lasts from a few seconds to a few minutes.

The surgery will be pain free. Please let us know if you have had any problems with local anaesthetic in the past. Depending on the procedure needed, it would probably take from 10 to 45 minutes to complete.

What should I expect after my surgery?

Normally there is a mild redness around your wound. This is part of the healing process but may cause some discomfort. This usually settles down after the stitches have been removed.

Going home

You may go home immediately after the procedure.

Breastfeeding

With regards to breastfeeding after use of local anaesthetic there is no need to express and discard breast milk after anaesthesia. You can breastfeed as normal following minor skin surgery. (Source: Guideline on anaesthesia and sedation in breastfeeding women - August 2020).

Discharge Information

Very small procedures may not need stitches. However, stitches are often necessary and will be left in for between one and two weeks. Some areas heal quicker than others. Stitches are normally taken out at your local treatment centre.

Leave the dressing in place for as long as possible, keep the area clean and dry, especially before your stitches have been removed.

You will be given a couple of dressings to take home with you.

Your wound may feel a little sore for a few days but any pain soon disappears as your wound heals. You can take your usual painkillers or paracetamol if you wish. Please don't exceed the maximum recommended dose.

Avoid sports or other strenuous activities that may stretch or put tension on the scar and delay the healing process.

Further Appointments

Your doctor may write to you and your GP with the results of the surgery. Alternatively, you may be given a clinic follow up appointment or a telephone follow up appointment where your results will be over the telephone.

Feedback

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

Further Information

Broadgreen Hospital Only

- **If you need to change your appointment at Broadgreen Hospital or have any concerns or queries please ring the dedicated Dermatology Surgical line on:
Tel: 0151 282 6979 or 0151 282 6656
Text phone number: 18001 0151 282 6979/18001 0151 282 6656**
- **If you have any concerns or queries and had your surgery at Broadgreen Hospital please contact the Dermatology Surgical Nurse Specialists:
Tel: 0151 282 6979
Textphone number: 18001 0151 282 6979**

Aintree Hospital Only

- **If you need to change your appointment at Aintree Hospital or have any concerns or queries please ring the dedicated Dermatology Surgical line on
Tel: 0151 529 0509
Text phone Number: 18001 0151 529 05097**

Appointment date:

Time:.....

**Author: Dermatology Department
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