

Advice following excision of skin lesion under local anaesthetic

Information for patients



These are instructions following the excision of skin lesions such as lipoma, cysts, skin warts, moles and other lumps and bumps.

The leaflet sets out what to expect in the recovery from your procedure. You will not routinely be sent a follow up appointment but will be able to request an appointment if you have any of the concerns explained in this leaflet. This is known as Patient Initiated Follow up (PIFU). It is intended to reduce the need for you to attend the hospital unnecessarily whilst also giving you access to help and advice should you need it.

Local anaesthetic procedure

After your operation under local anaesthetic, you will find that the area of operation will remain numb for a period. The skin around the operation site may look white. This colour change is due to the local anaesthetic and normal colour will return as the local anaesthetic wears off.

Pain relief

As the local anaesthetic wears off discomfort or pain may be experienced around the area. Simple analgesia will be enough in the majority of cases with paracetamol only or sometimes a small amount of ibuprofen (Ibuprofen should be avoided if you have asthma or stomach problems). These are available over the counter from any local pharmacy.

Wound care

You may notice slight swelling and bruising around the area. This should gradually decrease as the area heals.

The area that is operated on is usually covered by thin paper strips or tape and/or a white dressing or it can be left without a dressing and may have ointment applied to it.

It is important to keep the wound dry and clean for the first 24 hours. After that you can wash it with water and unperfumed soap, make sure to rinse all the soap and pat the stitches dry with a clean towel. If the wound is covered with Micropore tape or a standard dressing, this can get wet in the shower (not soaked in the bath or pool) and should then be patted dry. If dressings become so wet that they are holding moisture at the wound site they should be removed.

If the wound is left without a dressing you could use Vaseline as a dressing applied 2 to 3 times a day on the stitches line. Do not reapply without washing off the previous application first.

All wounds will be weak for up to 6 weeks when they should have regained as much strength as they are going to. Beyond this time they will mature in quality and colour for over a year. This is your window to moisturise and massage your scar daily to improve it. Use factor 50 sun protection over the scar until it has matured.

Advice for area of surgery

- 1. Surgery to the Mouth or Lips.** Because of the numbing effects of the local anaesthetic hot drinks or hot food should be avoided until the following day.
- 2. Surgery to the Face or Head.** Avoid leaning forward on the day of surgery as this may cause the area to bleed. Please use an extra pillow for the first few nights after surgery to help reduce swelling. If the wound is in the scalp, you can wash your hair as normal after 24 hours. If you use a hair dryer ensure it is on cool setting. Be careful when brushing or combing your hair not to catch the stitches.
- 3. Surgery to the Foot or Lower Leg.** Once home you should elevate your legs and rest as much as possible for the first 48 hours. During the first 48 hours, avoid long periods of standing. You may also find driving painful during the first 48 hours and may be instructed by your doctor not to drive for this period.
- 4. Surgery to the Hand or Arm.** You may need to wear a sling for a short period of time. You should elevate your arm or raise it on pillows for the first 24 hours if a sling is not worn.

Exercise

We advise you to take things easily for the first 48 hours to maintain a low risk of bleeding. For the first week avoid activities that would stretch the area where you have had surgery such that it might pull the wound open. After this you can resume your normal activity unless specifically advised not to by your surgeon. If you have an unusual level of activity or specific needs please check with your surgeon.

Driving

It is your responsibility to ensure that you would be able to respond in an emergency the way you would normally, for example to be able to turn the steering wheel hard to avoid a collision.

Time off work

You are allowed to take up to 7 consecutive days off for health reasons before a sick note is required of you from your employer. If you think you will need more time off than this to recover from your procedure please mention this to your surgeon and they will advise you. It will depend on how extensive the procedure is and the type of work you do so they will support you with a sick note if it is needed. See the government website for further information: www.gov.uk/taking-sick-leave

Important problems to look out for

- 1. Excessive bleeding.** If excessive bleeding occurs apply a clean tissue, or gauze, and apply firm pressure for approximately ten minutes without pausing. Do not stop applying pressure to look for bleeding until the full 10 minutes are completed. If bleeding continues and cannot be stopped attend your local emergency medical facility.
- 2. Signs of wound infection.** Redness around the wound, increasing pain, swelling, oozing or discharge from the wound, foul smelling discharge from wound, fevers/temperatures and feeling unwell. You may need antibiotics and further wound management.
- 3. Wound breakdown.** Skin separating at the wound site where it should have healed over.

If you experience any of these symptoms but are not unwell enough to require urgent treatment we will arrange for you to be seen in the Plastics Dressing Clinic.

In the future you may get a recurrence of the growth. If this happens we will book you in to the next available clinic with the team looking after you.

In either of these situations please phone 01865 231 065 to arrange this. This line is open from 8am to 12pm and 2pm to 4pm. Please make sure you have your Hospital number (known as MRN number) to hand and let them know that you are on the benign lesions PIFU pathway.

Follow up

There is usually no routine clinic follow up unless your doctor specifically advises this. The tissue that we remove will be sent to the laboratory to be checked and we will write to you with the results of the histology from your operation. We will only arrange follow up if needed.

Removal of stitches

We will usually use absorbable stitches for your operation. The outside part of the stitch will fall off after the inside part has been dissolved.

If your surgeon has used non-absorbable stitches they will tell you when you need them removed and where to have this done.

Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

Author: Plastic Surgery Team
November 2024
Review: November 2027
Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
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charity@ouh.nhs.uk | 01865 743 444 | hospitalcharity.co.uk

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