

Preparing for skin lesion removal

Your doctor will explain if there's anything you need to do before you have your procedure and discuss with you what will happen before, during and after your procedure and any pain you might have. This is your chance to ask questions so that you understand what will happen. You don't have to go ahead with the procedure if you decide you don't want it. Once you understand the procedure and if you agree to have it, you'll be asked to sign a consent form.

How are skin lesions removed?

The technique that your doctor uses to remove your skin lesion will depend on various factors, including size, type and location of the lesion. Your doctor will advise you which technique is most appropriate for you. Skin lesion removal is usually done under local anaesthesia. This blocks pain from the area and you'll stay awake during the procedure.

Techniques to remove a skin lesion include:

- **Complete removal.** This is when all of the lesion is cut out, using the full thickness of the skin. This technique is used to remove certain moles and any lesions that your doctor thinks might be cancerous. Your doctor will use a surgical blade to remove the whole lesion, plus a margin of 'normal' skin around the edge. The wound is then closed with stitches.
- **Partial removal.** This is when part of the lesion is cut out, using the full thickness of the skin. This technique is used to find out whether the lesion is cancerous or not. Your doctor will use a surgical

blade to remove part of the lesion. The wound is then closed with stitches. This is also known as an 'incisional biopsy' and further treatment may be necessary after the microscopic examination of the specimen.

- **Shave removal.** This is when the lesion is shaved off. This technique is used to remove non-cancerous lesions (such as actinic and seborrheic keratoses, certain moles, protruding lesions such as skin tags) as well as some superficial basal cell cancers (BCCs). Your doctor will use a surgical blade to cut below and across the base of the lesion.

This technique is often combined with electrocautery, when your doctor uses a device called a hyfrecator to apply an electrical current to your skin to seal it and stop it from bleeding. No stitches are required.

After your lesion has been removed, your doctor will usually apply a dressing to the wound.

What to expect afterwards

It may take several hours before feeling returns after a local anaesthetic. Take special care not to bump or knock the affected area, which might feel tender and sore. You'll usually be able to go home when you feel ready. Your doctor or nurse will give you some advice about caring for your healing wound before you go home. You may be given a date for a follow-up appointment.

Recovery

After having your skin lesion removed, your wound may take up to three weeks to heal.

Any non-dissolvable stitches will need removal by your doctor or nurse after about 10 to 14 days, or after about 7 days if the stitches are on your face. Any dissolvable stitches will disappear and for most skin lesion removal procedures this usually occurs in about 10 to 14 days.

If you need pain relief, you can take over the-counter painkillers such as paracetamol.

Always read the patient information leaflet that comes with your medicine and, if you have any questions, ask your pharmacist for advice.

Your scar may be red and raised at first. It will gradually fade over several months. If the area where your skin lesion was removed gets increasingly painful, or becomes red and sore, see your GP. You could have an infection in the wound and you may need to have some antibiotics.

Risks

As with every procedure, there are some risks associated with skin lesion removal. The chances of these happening vary and are specific to you, differing for every person. Ask your doctor to explain how these risks apply to you.

Side-effects

Side-effects are unwanted but mostly temporary effects that you may get after having the procedure. Side-effects of skin lesion removal include pain, swelling and bruising.

All surgical skin lesion removal procedures leave you with a scar. How big and how noticeable this will be depends on the type of

procedure you have and how much of your skin is removed. Ask your doctor about how much scarring to expect after your treatment. Most scars fade significantly over several months.

Complications

Complications can occur during or after the procedure and include:

- **Infection** - you may need to take antibiotics to treat this.
- **Changes in sensation** - such as numbness, or a burning sensation, in your skin. This can happen if nerves on the surface of your skin are damaged, but it's usually only temporary.
- **Keloid scarring**- unusual red or raised scars which may be unsightly and can be difficult to treat.
- **Excessive bleeding** - it is normal for the wound to bleed a little after surgery, but occasionally it can be more severe.

To find our clinic locations, and learn more about our services, visit **themoleclinic.co.uk** or call **0800 023 4212**

Skin Lesion Removal Guide v6.0 Dated 17042025