

# YOUNG DERMATOLOGY

## CRYOTHERAPY PATIENT GUIDE AND CARE INSTRUCTIONS

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This information explains what cryotherapy is and how to care for yourself after your cryotherapy procedure.

Cryotherapy is a procedure that uses extreme cold (liquid nitrogen) to destroy tissue. It is often used to treat skin lesions, which are skin growths or patches that appear suspicious and don't look like the skin around them. The lesions can be:

- Benign (not cancerous), such as warts, irritated seborrheic keratoses or skin tags
- Precancerous, such as actinic keratosis. These are scaly patches on your skin that could become cancer in the future.
- Superficial skin cancer (skin cancer that involves the surface cells of your skin).

Cryotherapy targets the lesion to be treated as specifically as possible and aims to save the area around the lesions from unnecessary damage and to reduce scarring as much as possible.

You don't have to do anything to prepare for cryotherapy but you may need to remove makeup, lotion, or powder before your procedure.

Your doctor will then spray liquid nitrogen on the area being treated to freeze it. The procedure is typically performed in short pulses for approximately 7 to 10 seconds, at a time.

### After Cryotherapy

- The treated area will become red soon after your procedure. It also may swell and blister. If this happens, don't break open the blister. If the blister drains spontaneously, don't disrupt or unroof the blister.
- You may also see clear drainage on the treated area. This is normal.
- The treated area will heal in about 7 to 10 days. It will probably not leave a scar. However, depending on your skin type (how easily your skin is able to tan), discoloration (either lighter or darker than surrounding skin) may occur after cryotherapy. This is not an uncommon side effect of the treatment.

### Caring for yourself after cryotherapy

- Starting on the day after your procedure, wash the treated area gently with fragrance-free soap and water daily.
- Leave the treated area uncovered. If you have any drainage, you can cover the area with a bandage (Band-Aid®).

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- Apply (Vaseline®) on the affected area twice daily until any crust which may develop, falls off.
- If you have any bleeding (this is extremely rare), press firmly on the area with a clean gauze pad for 15 minutes. If the bleeding doesn't stop, repeat this step. If the bleeding still hasn't stopped after repeating this step, please call our office (if this occurs during clinic hours). If this occurs after clinic hours, please proceed to the nearest Emergency Room.
- Don't use scented soap, makeup, or lotion on the treated area until it has healed. The treated area will usually heal 7-10 days after your procedure.
- You may lose some hair on the treated area. This depends on how deep the freezing went. The hair loss may be permanent if a scar is formed after cryotherapy.
- Once the treated area has healed, apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30 to the area to protect it from scarring or discoloration.
- You may have discoloration (pinkness, redness, or lighter or darker skin) at the treated area for up to 1 year after your procedure. Some people may have it for even longer or it may be permanent.

**Please call our office if You Have:**

- A temperature of 100.4° F (38° C) or higher
- Chills
- Any of the following symptoms at or around the treated area:
  - Redness or swelling that extends to areas of untreated skin
  - Increasing pain or discomfort in the treated area
  - Skin in the treated area that's hot or hard to the touch
  - Increasing oozing, or drainage (yellow or green) from the treated area
  - A bad smell
  - Bleeding that doesn't stop after applying pressure
- Any questions or concerns
- Any problems you didn't expect

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