

LIQUID NITROGEN TREATMENT

What is Liquid Nitrogen and what is it used for?

Liquid Nitrogen is a cold, liquefied gas with a temperature of 196° below zero Celsius (-321° Fahrenheit). It is used to freeze and destroy superficial skin growths such as warts and keratoses. Sometimes it is used to treat early skin cancers.

What happens during and after treatment?

Liquid Nitrogen causes stinging and mild pain while the growth is being frozen and then thaws. The discomfort lasts less than five minutes.

Some hours after treatment, your skin will become swollen and red; later on it may blister. Then a scab (crust) will form. It will fall off by itself in one to three weeks. The skin growth will come off along with the scab, leaving healthy new skin. In some cases, the skin may be lighter in color than the surrounding normal skin. This occurs especially in dark-skinned people.

If your growth required deep freezing to remove, there may be considerable blistering and swelling. The blisters and swelling are part of the treatment and will gradually heal by themselves. If the blister is tense and uncomfortable (especially if affecting the use of your hands or feet), it is okay to pop the blister and drain the fluid. This must be done with a sterile needle. However, the blister roof should be left in place. A clean sewing needle or pin may be sterilized by immersing it in boiling water for thirty seconds and using it immediately without touching it to anything else. Wipe the blister with alcohol before inserting the needle.

No other special care is needed after liquid nitrogen treatment. Just ignore it. You can wash your skin as usual and use makeup or other cosmetics. If clothing irritates the areas, cover it with a small bandage (Band-Aid).

What if the skin growth is not completely cured?

Since different people and different skin growths react differently, it is not always possible to know how long to freeze a particular skin growth. In order to avoid excessive blistering of benign growths, we sometimes do not freeze long enough to completely cure the skin growth. This frequent occurrence is easily taken care of by repeating the freezing.

Warts often need several freezing sessions. They should be frozen every 2-3 weeks until they are gone. If possible, do not wait any longer than this between freezing sessions for warts.