

Cryosurgery

What is cryosurgery?

Cryosurgery is using freezing to treat an unwanted skin lesion such as a verruca. There are three types commonly used depending on the preference of the operator. They are liquid nitrogen, nitrous oxide and carbon dioxide. Liquid nitrogen freezes to -190°C , nitrous oxide to -90°C and carbon dioxide to approx -75°C .

How does cryosurgery work?

When the tissue is frozen, the water content in the cells turns to ice, expands and fractures the cell wall killing it. When treating verrucas a large proportion of the tissue is destroyed in this way.

Does it hurt?

There is some discomfort associated with the procedure and for a few days afterwards. For this reason it is not recommended for children under the age of fourteen.

What do I need to do after freezing?

Immediately following the treatment a dressing will be applied. As the freezing process damages the tissue locally it needs to go through a healing process which normally takes about two weeks. To assist this process and to reduce the risk of infection you must keep the dressing in place and *dry* for three days.

After three days remove the dressing and examine your foot. It is common for the tissue in the treated area to look black or purple and possibly even to be weeping slightly. As long as there is no excessive pain or redness or swelling surrounding the treated area, then wash it carefully with warm soapy water and apply a little antiseptic cream and a fresh dry dressing. If you have *any* concerns ring the clinic and either discuss the issue over the phone or make an appointment to pop in for a check.

It is a good idea to apply a fresh dressing/plaster every day after washing.

How many treatments will I need?

As with any verruca treatment it is not possible to predict the number of visits required as much of the success of the treatment depends on how your immune system responds. For further information on this – see the information leaflet entitled 'Verrucas'.

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