

Patient Information

Minor Surgeries Patient Information Leaflet

What is?

Most minor surgeries involve removing lesions / lumps and bumps from the skin. Sutures (stitches) may be used to close the wound, and these will need removal after 1-2 weeks. Alternatively, electrical cautery (diathermy) may be used for wounds that are more superficial. The doctor will discuss the specifics of your procedure beforehand.

Why would I need this procedure?

The removal of a skin lesion is typically recommended for various reasons, and the decision is often based on medical considerations. Here are some common reasons why someone might need to undergo the removal of a skin lesion:

- **Cosmetic Concerns:** Skin lesions, such as moles or cysts, may be removed for cosmetic reasons if they are deemed unsightly or if a person is concerned about their appearance.
- **Concerns about Skin Cancer:** If a dermatologist suspects that a skin lesion could be cancerous or pre-cancerous, removal may be recommended for diagnostic purposes and to prevent the potential spread of cancerous cells.
- **Uncomfortable or Painful Lesions:** Lesions that cause discomfort, pain, itching, or irritation may be removed to alleviate symptoms and improve the patient's quality of life.
- **Changes in Appearance or Characteristics:** If a skin lesion undergoes changes in size, colour, shape, or texture, it may raise concerns about malignancy, prompting a recommendation for removal.
- **Biopsy:** In some cases, a skin lesion may be removed for a biopsy to determine its nature and whether it is benign or malignant.
- **Preventive Measures:** Removal may be recommended as a preventive measure if there is a high risk of a benign lesion becoming cancerous or if there is a family history of skin cancer.

It is essential to consult with a healthcare professional, typically a dermatologist, who can assess the specific characteristics of the skin lesion, consider your medical history, and recommend the most appropriate course of action based on individual circumstances.

What are the symptoms that have led to me having this procedure?

The decision to remove a skin lesion is often based on specific symptoms, changes in the lesion, or concerns about its nature. Here are some symptoms or characteristics that may lead to the recommendation for the removal of a skin lesion:

- **Changes in Size:** An increase in the size of a skin lesion, especially if it happens rapidly, can be a cause for concern.
- **Changes in Colour:** Alterations in the colour of a skin lesion, such as darkening or the presence of multiple colours, may raise suspicions.
- **Changes in Shape:** A change in the shape of a lesion, especially if it becomes irregular or asymmetrical, could be a warning sign.
- **Changes in Texture:** If the texture of the skin lesion changes, becoming rough, scaly, or ulcerated, it may warrant further investigation.
- **Bleeding or Oozing:** Lesions that bleed, ooze, or develop a crust should be evaluated, as these could be signs of potential malignancy.
- **Itching or Pain:** Persistent itching, discomfort, or pain associated with a skin lesion may be an indication for removal.
- **Rapid Growth:** Lesions that grow quickly or exhibit rapid changes may be considered for removal.

- **Family or Personal History of Skin Cancer:** Individuals with a family history of skin cancer or a personal history of skin cancer may be advised to remove certain lesions preventively.
- **Uncertain Diagnosis:** If a dermatologist cannot definitively diagnose a skin lesion through visual examination alone, they may recommend removal for further testing, such as a biopsy.

It is recommended to consult with a healthcare professional, typically a dermatologist, if you notice any of these symptoms or if you have concerns about a particular skin lesion. Early detection and appropriate management can be essential in addressing potential skin issues.

What are the alternatives?

The appropriate treatment for a skin lesion depends on various factors, including the type of lesion, its size, location, and whether there are any underlying health concerns. In some cases, alternatives to minor surgery may be considered. Here are some common alternatives:

- **Topical Medications:** Certain skin lesions, such as warts or actinic keratosis, may be treated with topical medications. These medications are applied directly to the skin and work to address the lesion without the need for surgical removal.
- **Cryotherapy:** Cryotherapy involves freezing the skin lesion using liquid nitrogen. This can be an effective method for removing certain types of lesions, such as warts or small skin tags.
- **Electro surgery:** Electro surgery uses high-frequency electrical currents to remove or destroy a skin lesion. It can be an alternative to traditional surgical excision for certain types of lesions.
- **Laser Therapy:** Laser therapy is often used to treat various skin conditions, including certain pigmented lesions, blood vessel abnormalities, or unwanted hair. It can be a non-invasive alternative to surgery.
- **Photodynamic Therapy (PDT):** PDT involves using a photosensitising agent and a light source to treat certain skin lesions, including actinic keratosis and some types of skin cancer.
- **Intraregional Injections:** In some cases, injections of medication directly into the lesion may be used. This approach is often employed for certain types of cysts or keloids.
- **Monitoring and Observation:** In situations where the lesion is benign and not causing any symptoms, a healthcare professional may choose to monitor the lesion over time rather than opting for immediate removal. This approach is often considered for smaller, stable lesions.

It is important to note that the choice of treatment depends on the specific characteristics of the skin lesion and should be determined by a healthcare professional, typically a dermatologist. They will consider the nature of the lesion, patient preferences, and potential risks and benefits when recommending the most appropriate course of action.

What are the potential risks and side effects?

While minor surgery for the excision of a skin lesion is generally considered safe, it does come with potential risks and side effects. It is advisable to discuss these with your healthcare provider before undergoing any procedure. Here are some common risks and side effects associated with minor surgery for the excision of a skin lesion:

- **Pain and Discomfort:** Some pain or discomfort at the surgical site is common after the procedure. This is usually temporary and can be managed with over-the-counter pain medications.
- **Bleeding:** Minor bleeding is a common side effect of surgery. In most cases, this can be controlled with pressure and dressing. However, excessive bleeding may require medical attention.
- **Infection:** There is a risk of infection at the surgical site. Following proper wound care instructions provided by your healthcare provider can help minimize this risk.
- **Scarring:** Scarring is a natural part of the healing process after any surgical procedure. The extent of scarring can vary depending on factors such as the size and location of the lesion and individual healing characteristics.

- **Allergic Reactions:** Rarely, individuals may have an allergic reaction to anaesthesia, surgical materials, or post-operative medications. It is important to inform your healthcare provider of any known allergies.
- **Delayed Healing:** Some people may experience delayed wound healing, which could result in prolonged redness, swelling, or discomfort at the surgical site.
- **Changes in Sensation:** In certain cases, there may be changes in sensation, such as numbness or tingling, around the surgical area. These changes are typically temporary but can persist in some cases.
- **Recurrence of Lesion:** While the goal of excision is to completely remove the lesion, there is a small risk of recurrence. This is more common with certain types of lesions.
- **Nerve or Blood Vessel Damage:** In rare cases, there may be damage to nearby nerves or blood vessels during the surgical procedure, leading to sensory or circulation issues.

It is advised to follow post-operative care instructions provided by your healthcare provider to minimise these risks and promote proper healing. If you experience severe pain, persistent bleeding, signs of infection (such as redness, swelling, or discharge), or any other concerning symptoms, it is recommended to contact SPH promptly.

What are the expected benefits of treatment?

The treatment for the excision of a skin lesion, when deemed necessary, can offer several potential benefits. The specific benefits may vary depending on the type of lesion, its characteristics, and the individual's health. Here are some expected benefits of undergoing treatment for the excision of a skin lesion:

- **Diagnostic Information:** Excision allows for the removal of the entire lesion, providing a specimen for histopathological examination. This can help diagnose the nature of the lesion, determining whether it is benign, precancerous, or malignant.
- **Cancer Prevention:** If the lesion is found to be precancerous or early-stage cancer, excision can prevent the potential progression of cancerous cells and reduce the risk of spreading to surrounding tissues.
- **Symptom Relief:** Removal of a symptomatic lesion, such as one causing pain, itching, or discomfort, can provide immediate relief and improve the patient's quality of life.
- **Cosmetic Improvement:** Excision is often performed for cosmetic reasons, such as the removal of moles, skin tags, or other lesions that may be considered unsightly. This can lead to improved aesthetics and increased confidence.
- **Prevention of Complications:** For certain types of lesions, excision can prevent complications such as infection, bleeding, or changes in appearance that may result from leaving the lesion untreated.
- **Psychological Well-being:** The removal of a concerning, or suspicious skin lesion can offer peace of mind and alleviate anxiety associated with the uncertainty of its nature. This can positively affect a patient's psychological well-being.
- **Improved Function:** In cases where a lesion interferes with normal bodily functions, such as movement or sensory perception, excision can restore normal function and comfort.
- **Preventive Measures:** Removal of certain lesions that pose a risk of becoming cancerous in the future can serve as a preventive measure, reducing the likelihood of developing more serious health issues down the line.

It is important to note that the benefits of treatment should be carefully weighed against potential risks and discussed with a healthcare provider. The decision to undergo excision should be based on individual circumstances, including the type of lesion, its location, and the overall health of the patient. Always consult with a qualified healthcare professional for personalised advice and guidance.

What should I do before I come into hospital?

Before coming into a hospital or medical facility for the excision of a skin lesion as part of minor surgery, patients can take several preparatory steps to ensure a smooth and safe experience. Here are some general guidelines:

- **Consultation with Healthcare Provider:** Schedule a consultation with the healthcare provider who will perform the procedure. This is an opportunity to discuss the details of the surgery, ask any questions, and address concerns.
- **Provide Medical History:** Provide a detailed medical history, including any allergies, current medications, previous surgeries, and existing health conditions. This information helps the healthcare team tailor the procedure and anaesthesia to individual needs.
- **Follow Pre-Operative Instructions:** Adhere to any specific pre-operative instructions provided by the healthcare provider. This may include guidelines on fasting before the surgery, discontinuing certain medications, or using special skin preparations.
- **Arrange Transportation:** Since minor surgery may involve anaesthesia or sedation, arrange for someone to accompany you to the hospital and drive you home afterward. It is generally advised not to drive for a certain period after receiving anaesthesia.
- **Dress Comfortably:** Wear comfortable clothing on the day of the surgery. Loose-fitting garments that allow easy access to the surgical site are preferable.
- **Hygiene:** Follow any hygiene instructions provided by the healthcare team. This may involve showering with a specific soap or avoiding lotions or creams on the day of the surgery.
- **Remove Jewellery and Accessories:** Remove jewellery, piercings, and accessories before the procedure. This is done to ensure they do not interfere with the surgery and to minimize the risk of loss or damage.
- **Arrive on Time:** Arrive at the hospital or medical facility on time for the scheduled procedure. Punctuality is crucial for proper preparation and to adhere to the surgical schedule.
- **Ask Questions:** If there are any lingering questions or concerns, do not hesitate to ask the healthcare provider or outpatient team. Understanding the procedure and having clear expectations can help alleviate anxiety.
- **Bring Necessary Documents:** Bring any necessary documents, identification, insurance information, and pre-operative paperwork as requested by the healthcare facility.

Following these guidelines can contribute to a safer and more efficient surgical experience. Always follow the specific instructions provided by your healthcare provider, as they may tailor recommendations based on your individual health and the nature of the skin lesion.

Will I have an anaesthetic?

Yes. Local anaesthetic, administered through an injection similar to those used by dentists, is used for all minor operations. The local anaesthetic's effects last approximately 2-3 hours.

How will I feel afterwards?

After minor surgery, specifically the excision of a skin lesion, patients may experience a range of sensations and symptoms. It is important to note that individual experiences can vary, and factors such as the type of procedure, the size and location of the lesion, and the patient's overall health can influence post-surgical feelings. Here are some general considerations:

- **Pain and Discomfort:** It is common to experience some level of pain or discomfort at the surgical site. This can typically be managed with over-the-counter pain medications or medications prescribed by the healthcare provider.
- **Swelling and Bruising:** Swelling and bruising may occur around the surgical area. This is a normal part of the healing process and usually subsides over time.
- **Fatigue:** Anaesthesia or the stress of the surgery may contribute to feelings of fatigue or drowsiness. It is important for the patient to get adequate rest during the initial recovery period.
- **Nausea:** Some patients may experience mild nausea or queasiness after receiving anaesthesia. This is usually temporary, but it is essential to inform healthcare providers if it persists.

- **Wound Care Instructions:** Patients will receive specific wound care instructions from their healthcare provider. Following these instructions is crucial for proper healing and to minimise the risk of infection.
- **Limited Activity:** Depending on the nature of the surgery, patients may be advised to limit certain activities, especially those that could strain the surgical site. Rest and avoiding strenuous activities may be recommended during the initial recovery period.
- **Emotional Well-being:** It is not uncommon for patients to experience a range of emotions after surgery, including relief, anxiety, or a sense of vulnerability. It is important to communicate any concerns or emotional reactions with healthcare providers.
- **Follow-Up Appointments:** Patients may have follow-up appointments scheduled to monitor the healing process. During these appointments, healthcare providers can address any questions or concerns and assess the progress of the recovery.
- **Dressing Changes:** Depending on the type of surgery, patients may need to change dressings or keep the surgical site clean. Following proper wound care procedures is essential for preventing complications.
- **Return to Normal Activities:** The timeline for returning to normal activities varies depending on the extent of the surgery. Patients should follow their healthcare provider's guidance on when it is safe to resume regular activities.

It is important for patients to communicate openly with their healthcare providers about any symptoms or concerns during the recovery period. If there are signs of infection, excessive pain, or other unusual symptoms, seeking prompt medical attention is advised. Overall, with proper care and adherence to post-operative instructions, most patients recover well from minor surgery for skin lesion excision.

How long will I be in hospital?

Minor surgery at the Outpatient's Department at Sussex Premier Health is a relatively painless and quick procedure, usually lasting no more than 45 minutes.

What should I do when I go home?

- **Immediate Post-Surgery Period:** After the surgery, patients may experience some immediate postoperative effects, such as localised discomfort. It is advisable to rest on the day of the surgery and refrain from engaging in strenuous activities.
- **Next 24-48 Hours:** During the initial 24-48 hours, it is recommended to take it easy and avoid activities that could strain the surgical site. Rest and elevation of the affected area may help minimise swelling and discomfort.

How soon will I be able to resume normal activities?

The timeline for resuming normal activities after minor surgery for the removal of a skin lesion can vary based on factors such as the type of surgery, the size and location of the lesion, and individual healing characteristics. However, here are some general guidelines:

- **Exercise and Strenuous Activities:** Strenuous exercise and activities that put strain on the surgical site should be avoided for a specified period, typically ranging from a few days to a few weeks. Follow the specific guidelines provided by your healthcare provider.
- **Driving:** If anaesthesia was used during the procedure, patients are usually advised not to drive immediately afterward. It is important to have someone accompany you to the surgery and drive you home. Once the effects of anaesthesia have worn off and pain is manageable, patients can typically resume driving.
- **Wound Healing:** The complete healing of the surgical wound may take several weeks. During this time, it is important to follow the prescribed wound care instructions to prevent infection and promote optimal healing.
- **Avoiding Sun Exposure:** Protecting the surgical site from direct sunlight is crucial during the initial healing phase. Sunscreen and protective clothing should be used as recommended by the healthcare provider.

- **Follow-Up Appointments:** Attend any scheduled follow-up appointments with your healthcare provider. They will assess the progress of the healing and provide further guidance on when it is safe to resume specific activities.

It is essential to note that individual recovery experiences may vary, and patients should follow the specific instructions provided by their healthcare provider. If there are any concerns or if the recovery does not progress as expected, it is crucial to communicate with the healthcare team promptly. Overall, a gradual return to normal activities is advised, taking into consideration the specific postoperative guidelines provided by the healthcare provider.

Will I have to come back to hospital?

After all minor surgery, patients routinely come back into SPH for removal of sutures 10-14 days after surgery.

If you have any issues before then, you can come back in to SPH to have the area checked out.

When can I return to work?

The timing for a patient to return to work after excision of a skin lesion, considered minor surgery, can vary based on several factors, including the type of surgery, the location and size of the lesion, and the nature of the patient's job. Here are some general guidelines, but it is advised to follow the specific recommendations provided by the healthcare provider:

- **Return to Work:** The time it takes to return to work can vary. Many patients can typically resume work within a day or two, especially if the nature of their job allows for limited physical activity. Jobs that involve strenuous physical activity or significant sun exposure may require additional time off
- **Desk Job or Sedentary Work:** For individuals with sedentary or desk jobs, returning to work may be possible within a day or two after the surgery, especially if they can manage any discomfort and do not need to engage in physically strenuous activities.
- **Moderate Physical Activity:** Jobs that involve moderate physical activity may require a few days to a week off, depending on the extent of the surgery. This allows time for initial healing and reduces the risk of complications.
- **Strenuous Physical Activity:** Jobs that involve strenuous physical activity or heavy lifting may require a more extended period off work. The healthcare provider will provide guidance on when it is safe to resume such activities, typically ranging from a few days to a few weeks.
- **Sun Exposure Considerations:** If the surgical site is exposed to the sun during work hours, additional precautions may be necessary, such as wearing protective clothing or using sunscreen. The healthcare provider will provide recommendations based on the specific case.
- **Post-Anaesthesia Considerations:** If anaesthesia or sedation was administered during the procedure, it is important to consider the recovery from these effects. Patients may be advised not to drive or engage in work-related activities immediately after surgery.
- **Individual Healing Factors:** Individual healing factors can influence the return to work timeline. Some patients may recover more quickly than others, while certain health conditions or complications may necessitate additional time off.

Consent

Although you consent for this treatment, you may at any time after that withdraw such consent. Please discuss this with your medical team.

Sources of information

ESHT Patient Information.
Kate Mannion OPD Lead.

Important information

The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is not provided to replace professional clinical advice from a qualified practitioner.

Your comments

We are always interested to hear your views about our leaflets. If you have any comments, please contact the patient experience team on 0300 131 4784 or esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net.

Hand hygiene

We are committed to maintaining a clean, safe environment. Hand hygiene is very important in controlling infection. Alcohol gel is widely available at the patient bedside for staff use and at the entrance of each clinical area for visitors to clean their hands before and after entering.

Other formats

If you require any of our leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department on 0300 131 4434 or esh-tr.AccessibleInformation@nhs.net

After reading this information are there any questions you would like to ask? Please list below and ask your nurse or doctor.

Reference

The following clinicians have been consulted and agreed this patient information:

Dr N.Alwash – Consultant Dermatologist

The directorate group that has agreed this patient information leaflet:

Divisional Governance Group and Divisional Management Group – Sussex Premier Health

Next review date: March 2026

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