

Department of Dermatology, Churchill Hospital

Having a minor operation

Information for patients



Your dermatologist has recommended that you have a minor (small) operation for your skin problem. This may involve the complete removal of your skin lesion or just the removal of a small sample (a skin biopsy). The piece of skin which is removed will be looked at under a microscope. This will help us to diagnose and treat your skin condition.

Before the operation

On the day of your surgery please eat normally and take all your regular medicines (including aspirin and warfarin) unless you have been advised otherwise.

If you are taking warfarin please have your warfarin blood level (INR) checked at your GP surgery in the week before your operation. If you live outside Oxfordshire please bring the results with you. Your INR needs to be 3 or below. If it is higher than this we may need to postpone your operation.

If you would like to, you can bring someone with you to keep you company before the procedure.

Arriving at the hospital

When you arrive at the hospital please report to the main Dermatology reception. The receptionist will direct you to the correct waiting area. A nurse will then collect you and take you into the operating theatre. You should be able to stay in your own clothes, depending on where on your body you are having the operation.

Please tell the doctor if:

- you are taking warfarin, aspirin, clopidogrel or dipyridamole
- you are allergic to sticky plaster/tape, local anaesthetic or adrenaline

- you have heart trouble, a pacemaker or are prone to fainting
- you have a known blood born infection risk, such as hepatitis B, hepatitis C or HIV
- you have a condition which makes you bleed more easily, e.g. haemophilia.

What happens during the operation?

The doctor will inject local anaesthetic around the area that is being operated on. This will sting briefly but will soon go numb, and means that you should not feel any pain during your operation. If you do feel any discomfort, please let the doctor know and we will give you more anaesthetic.

The anaesthetic will only numb the affected area and you will be awake during the operation. Minor operations usually take between 20 and 30 minutes and you will be able to go home afterwards.

After the operation

You will have a dressing put over the area that has been operated on and will be given a leaflet about wound care from the nurse. You can then go home or can return to reception to book your follow-up appointment, if you need one.

We recommend that you do not to drive yourself home if possible after your operation, particularly if your dressings interfere with your vision or with driving. You may like to bring someone with you who could drive you home.

Looking after your wound

After your operation you will be given a separate information leaflet telling you how to look after your wound.

Removing your stitches

We often use stitches (sutures) to close the wound after an operation. The type of stitch we use depends on the operation you have had and the place on your body where it has been carried out.

Some stitches are dissolvable and others need to be removed – these are usually taken out 7 to 14 days after surgery. This can be done at your GP surgery or we may ask you to return to the clinic to have your stitches removed when we give you your results. If you are due to go on holiday within 2 weeks of your operation we may need to reschedule your operation, so that the stitches can be removed before you go.

Risks and side effects

Any minor operation will have risks, including scarring, bleeding and wound infection. The doctor or nurse who carries out your operation will discuss these and any additional risks or side effects with you at the time of operation.

Contacting us

If you have any concerns, or if you need to change your appointment time, please telephone the Dermatology department.

Tel: 01865 228 225

There is also an answer machine for calls outside of hours, which is checked daily.

If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter, a document in Easy Read, another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221 473** or email **PALSJR@ouh.nhs.uk**

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