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Liquid Nitrogen Treatment (Cryosurgery)

Liquid nitrogen is a super cold, liquid gas with a temperature of -321 degrees Fahrenheit. It is used to freeze and destroy superficial skin growths such as warts and keratoses. Liquid nitrogen causes a stinging or burning sensation while the growth is being frozen and then thaws. The discomfort generally lasts less than five minutes, but may last longer depending on the thickness of the lesion.

What will happen to the treated area?

Some hours after liquid nitrogen treatment, your skin will become swollen and red; later on it may blister. A scab or crust will form that will fall off by itself in one to three weeks. The skin growth will generally come off along with the scab, leaving healthy, new skin. If your growth requires deep freezing to remove, there may be considerable blistering and swelling, especially on areas of your body where the skin is thinner. The blisters and swelling are part of the treatment and will gradually heal by themselves.

How do I care for the area after treatment?

No special care is needed after liquid nitrogen treatment, but a small amount of Vaseline can be applied daily to soften the scab. If a blister forms, do not disturb or burst it, as that increases the chances of infection and scarring. You can wash your skin and use cosmetics. If clothing irritates the area, you may cover it with a small bandage.

Will one office visit take care of my problem?

Multiple office visits may be necessary. Warts are seldom cured in one or two visits. Skin tags and keratoses are often removed with an initial treatment, but may require additional treatment as well. Fees apply for cosmetic removals. For non-cosmetic removals, we advise that you check with your insurance company to determine coverage by your particular plan. Common CPT procedure codes to check are 17000 and 17110. Our insurance specialist can give you the information you need to make this call.

If the growth is not completely removed or recurs, please call us at (803) 802-3376 to schedule a follow-up appointment.