

Wound Care for Liquid Nitrogen Treatment

Liquid nitrogen is an extremely cold liquid (-321 degrees Fahrenheit; -196 degrees Celsius) which causes almost instantaneous frostbite. This rapid freezing will rapidly destroy superficial skin growths and lesions.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- **Discomfort at the site:** Immediately following treatment, the area(s) will become red, swollen and tender. There will be some discomfort (much like a burn) but this should subside within several hours. Tylenol or Acetaminophen may be taken as needed.
- **Swelling:** Treatment of areas on the forehead, nose, or eyelids can result in painless swelling of the eyelids, especially noted in the morning. It can be normal to develop a “black eye.” This expected effect should subside in 2-7 days. An icepack will help minimize the swelling of these soft tissues
- **Blistering:** Within 1-2 days a blister may develop. This may be a clear blister or a blood blister. If the blister is uncomfortable, it is okay to puncture it on the side with a sterile (alcohol soaked) needle but leave the blister roof in place.
- **Scabbing:** Following the blister, a raw, crusted or scabbed area may develop. It is normal for this wound to ooze a small amount of clear fluid. Do not pick at the area.
- **Peeling:** After 7-10 days the area will start to peel, or if it forms a scab, dark parts of the scab will start to crumble off.
- **Redness:** After peeling, the area is likely to be slightly pink; this will fade after several days or weeks, depending on your skin type.

CARE OF THE SITE

- Clean the treated areas daily with warm soapy water (no alcohol, hydrogen peroxide or other cleaners) and apply a small amount of Vaseline or antibiotic ointment. Keeping the areas moist with ointment will speed the healing process, decrease the chance of infection and improve the final appearance of the scar. A band-aid may also be necessary.
- The wound should heal completely within one to several weeks, depending on the size of the original lesion and the depth of the freezing. However, the area may remain pink for sever weeks or even months after healing is complete.
- Do not pick at the area – it may cause scarring or a longer healing time.
- In darker skinned individuals, a loss of pigment in the treated area is very common. Usually the color will return within 3-4 months. However, there is a chance that the area will never return to your normal skin color.
- It is normal to have some redness, swelling, tenderness or drainage during the healing process. However, if the area becomes hot, excessively tender, red or swollen or draining pus, the wound may be getting infected. Call the office as soon as possible if these complications develop. Call our office if you are worried there might be something wrong.

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