

PATIENT INFORMATION

Dermatology Outpatient Clinic and Skin Surgery Information



Attending your Dermatology Outpatient Clinic appointment.

You have been offered this appointment because you have a skin lesion that needs to be reviewed by a dermatologist (skin specialist).

During this appointment you will be reviewed and given a diagnosis of what your lesion is. It may require treatment at your appointment including topical treatments, cryotherapy (a medical treatment using extreme cold to freeze & destroy abnormal skin cells), or a minor skin procedure to remove the lesion.

If you have a ReSPECT form, please bring it with you to your appointment.

The appropriate treatments will be explained to you by the clinician during your appointment. You will be assessed for suitability if a skin surgical procedure is required and have an opportunity to ask questions and discuss your care during your appointment.

What is a skin surgery procedure?

Skin surgery is usually a simple procedure where a doctor or nurse will remove a skin lesion using a local anaesthetic.

The lesion will be first marked and photographed. Local anaesthetic will be injected directly into the skin which will cause the area to become numb so that you do not feel any pain during the procedure.

When a local anaesthetic is used you can eat and drink as normal. You are not put to sleep, and in most cases, you will be able to leave the hospital following the procedure.

The lesion will then be removed or biopsied dependant on what is decided by the clinician.

A biopsy is the removal of tissue for study and diagnosis, under a microscope. It is sometimes used to completely remove lesions.

There are several ways of carrying out a biopsy:

- **Punch biopsy:** a round piece of skin is removed for testing in the laboratory using a specially designed instrument. Stitches are sometimes required.
- **Shave biopsy:** some skin lesions can be shaved off the skin leaving a small wound, which is then sealed by cauterisation.
- **Curettage and cautery** - some skin lesions can be scooped out with a surgical cutting spoon, and the wound is then sealed with cauterisation.
- **Excisional biopsy:** some skin lesions need cutting out of the skin. These wounds will require stitches as the wounds from these may be larger than the original lesion.

What are the benefits of surgery?

- A specimen can be sent for analysis to confirm a diagnosis.
- The lesion will be removed.
- Symptoms may be improved.

What are the risks of surgery?

All skin surgery carries the following risks:

- Bleeding.
- Scarring.
- Wound infection.
- Wound breakdown/splitting.

These risks will be explained to you during your consultation prior to your procedure.

Tell the doctor or nurse if you have a pacemaker or Implanted Defibrillator fitted.

There are some medicines which thin the blood and can make bleeding more likely. Please tell the doctor or nurse if you are taking any blood thinning medications such as Warfarin, Aspirin, Dipyridamole, Clopidogrel or Rivaroxaban. For most minimal skin procedures you would not be required to stop these medications if you do you will be advised by your consultant prior to the procedure.

What to expect after my procedure?

It is advisable to arrange for someone to drive you home after your surgery. This will prevent any unnecessary trauma to the area being treated.

Any driving at this time depends on your immediate recovery, and it is advised to be cautious.

It is also recommended to check with your car insurance provider regarding driving after your procedure which will avoid invalidating your insurance if the local anaesthetic impairs your driving.

You may have some pain and discomfort following your procedure; it is usually well controlled with mild pain relief such as paracetamol or whatever you usually take to control mild pain.

You may have some swelling to the area where the procedure has been performed; this is common and usually resolves on its own. If you notice swelling that persists or worsens after 3–4 days, please consult your GP or healthcare provider

You may want to avoid exercise due to an increased risk of complications ideally for at least two weeks.

We will contact you with your results within six weeks. If you have not received any communication by that time, please reach out to the Dermatology Department

Contact details:

Who to contact: Main Switch Board (ask for the Dermatology Medical Secretaries)

Monday to Friday

8.00am until 4.00pm

Telephone: 01905 763333

If your symptoms or condition worsens, or if you are concerned about anything, please call your GP, 111, or 999.

Patient Experience

We know that being admitted to hospital can be a difficult and unsettling time for you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak with a member of staff on the ward or in the relevant department who will do their best to answer your questions and reassure you.

Feedback

Feedback is really important and useful to us – it can tell us where we are working well and where improvements can be made. There are lots of ways you can share your experience with us including completing our Friends and Family Test – cards are available and can be posted on all wards, departments and clinics at our hospitals. We value your comments and feedback and thank you for taking the time to share this with us.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you have any concerns or questions about your care, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge or the department manager in the first instance as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve concerns quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help resolve your concern, you can contact the PALS Team. We offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital services & experiences.

Our PALS team will liaise with the various departments in our hospitals on your behalf, if you feel unable to do so, to resolve your problems and where appropriate refer to outside help.

If you are still unhappy you can contact the Complaints Department, who can investigate your concerns. You can make a complaint orally, electronically or in writing and we can advise and guide you through the complaints procedure.

How to contact PALS:

Telephone Patient Services: 0300 123 1732 or via email at: wah-tr.PALS@nhs.net

Opening times:

The PALS telephone lines are open Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 4.00pm. Please be aware that you may need to leave a voicemail message, but we aim to return your call within one working day.

If you are unable to understand this leaflet, please communicate with a member of staff.