

Patient information on liquid nitrogen treatment

What is liquid nitrogen?

It is a very cold liquid (-20°C to -196°C depending on technique) that can be applied to the skin using a cotton bud or spray. It is used for the treatment of warts, verruca and areas of sun damage skin (e.g. actinic keratoses)

How does liquid nitrogen work?

It freezes the abnormal skin cells and destroys them.

How many treatments will I require?

This depends on:

- How many areas of skin need to be treated
- How you respond to the treatment
- How often you are able to attend for appointments

Generally an average of 6 visits is required at 2-3 weekly intervals. This will vary depending on individual circumstances.

What are the possible side effects?

Immediate effects

Some pain and stinging will start during the treatment and can continue for some hours after the treatment. Redness and sometimes swelling and blistering can occur at the treatment site. This may happen immediately or a day or two later. If blisters occur these can be blood filled.

Long-term effects

Lighting or darkening of the skin area treated can occur, especially in darker pigmented skin. This may be permanent. Permanent scarring at the treatment area is possible.

Changes to the future nail shape are possible if the treatment area is around the nail bed.

Treatment is not always effective.

How do I care for the treatment site after he/she has had liquid nitrogen applied?

- Leave it alone
- If you are experiencing pain take paracetamol or your usual pain relief medicine. A topical corticosteroid can also help the inflammation
- If blisters become large and painful prick with a sterile needle and then let the fluid drain out. To sterilize the needle, boil it in water for 10 minutes.
- Do not take the top skin off the blister as this will make infection more likely to occur and the area more painful and slower to heal.
- Cover the site with a simple dressing or elasoplast until the lesion has dried and is comfortable.

Do I need to treat my.....between liquid nitrogen treatments?

The nurse will advise you on specific treatment instructions

When will I be seen by the doctor again?

You will only see the doctor again if there is a problem or if you require lengthy treatment