

Minor Skin Surgery

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This leaflet provides information about minor skin surgery. It explains what the procedure involves, why it may be recommended, what to expect before and after treatment, and how to care for yourself during recovery.

If you are unsure about any part of this information, please speak to a healthcare professional involved in your care.

What is minor skin surgery?

Minor skin surgery usually involves removing small skin lesions such as lumps, bumps, cysts, or moles. The procedure is typically carried out under local anaesthetic.

Depending on the type and depth of the lesion, the wound may be closed with stitches, which are usually removed after one to two weeks. In some cases, other techniques may be used for more superficial lesions. The healthcare professional performing the procedure will explain what is planned beforehand.

Why might this procedure be recommended?

Removal of a skin lesion may be recommended for several reasons, based on medical assessment and individual circumstances.

Common reasons include:

- Concern about the nature of a skin lesion
- Symptoms such as pain, itching, bleeding, or irritation
- Diagnostic purposes, such as sending tissue for testing
- Preventive reasons where a lesion may pose a future risk
- Cosmetic concerns, where appropriate

The decision to proceed is made after considering your medical history, the characteristics of the lesion, and potential benefits and risks.

What symptoms or changes may lead to this procedure?

A healthcare professional may recommend removal if a skin lesion shows concerning features or causes symptoms.

These may include:

- Rapid growth or change in size
- Changes in colour or shape
- Bleeding, oozing, or crusting
- Persistent pain, itching, or discomfort
- Uncertainty about the diagnosis on examination

If you notice changes to a skin lesion, it is important to seek medical advice.

Are there alternatives to minor surgery?

In some cases, alternatives to surgical removal may be considered, depending on the type and location of the lesion.

Possible alternatives may include:

- Topical treatments
- Freezing treatments
- Other non-surgical procedures
- Monitoring the lesion over time

A healthcare professional will discuss whether any alternatives are suitable for you and explain the reasons for their recommendation.

What are the potential risks and side effects?

Minor skin surgery is a commonly performed procedure and most people do not experience serious problems. However, as with any procedure, there are some risks.

These may include:

- Pain or discomfort at the site
- Bleeding
- Infection
- Scarring
- Delayed healing
- Temporary changes in sensation

Rarely, other complications may occur. You will be advised how to reduce risks and what signs to look out for after the procedure.

What are the expected benefits?

Potential benefits of removing a skin lesion may include:

- Clarifying the diagnosis
- Preventing the progression of certain conditions
- Relief from symptoms
- Cosmetic improvement
- Peace of mind

The expected benefits should always be considered alongside potential risks, and this will be discussed with you before treatment.

What should I do before my appointment?

Before attending for minor surgery, you may be asked to:

- Provide details of your medical history and current medication
- Inform staff of any allergies
- Follow any preparation instructions given to you
- Wear comfortable clothing that allows access to the treatment area

You should ask any questions you may have before the procedure takes place.

Will I have an anaesthetic?

Yes. Minor skin surgery is performed using a local anaesthetic. This numbs the area being treated and usually lasts for a few hours. You will remain awake during the procedure.

How will I feel afterwards?

After the procedure, it is normal to experience some discomfort, swelling, or bruising around the treated area. These effects usually improve over time.

You will be given advice on:

- Caring for the wound
- Managing discomfort
- Activity restrictions, if needed
- Signs of infection or complications

It is important to follow this advice to support healing.

How long will I be in the clinic?

Minor skin surgery is usually a short outpatient procedure. Most appointments last less than an hour, and you can usually go home shortly afterwards.

What should I do when I go home?

After going home, you should:

- Rest on the day of the procedure
- Avoid strenuous activity for a short period
- Keep the wound clean and dry as advised
- Follow any dressing or wound-care instructions

Contact a healthcare professional if you have concerns about healing or notice signs of infection.

When can I return to normal activities and work?

Most people can return to normal activities within a few days, depending on the type and location of the surgery. Returning to work may be possible within a short time, especially for desk-based roles.

If your work involves physical activity or sun exposure, you may need additional time or precautions. Your healthcare professional will advise you.

Will I need a follow-up appointment?

In many cases, a follow-up appointment is arranged to:

- Remove stitches, if used
- Check wound healing
- Discuss test results, if applicable

You will be informed if follow-up is required.

Consent and your choice

You will be asked to give consent before the procedure. You have the right to ask questions and can withdraw your consent at any time before treatment takes place.

Finding further information or help

If you have questions about your procedure, recovery, or safety, contact a healthcare professional involved in your care.

If you experience severe pain, persistent bleeding, signs of infection, or other concerning symptoms, contact your GP or the clinic promptly.