

## Removal of facial skin lesion

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This leaflet aims to enhance your understanding of the upcoming treatment and addresses many common questions. If you have any additional questions or need further clarification, please do not hesitate to ask.

### The problem

You have a lesion on the skin of your face that requires removal. It has been discussed with you that this is the best form of treatment, rather than using creams, lotions, or freezing the area. The removal involves a local anaesthetic, meaning you will be awake but the area will be numb, so you feel no pain.

### What does the operation involve?

First, the area in and around the skin lesion will be numbed with a local anaesthetic injection, which takes a few minutes to work. An antiseptic solution may then be used to clean the area, and special ink will mark out the piece of skin to be removed. The removal time varies depending on the size of the area but typically takes between 20 and 30 minutes.

### Is anything done after the area is removed?

Removal of the lesion leaves a hole in the skin, which can be repaired in one of three ways:

- If the hole is small, the surrounding skin can be gently pulled together with stitches. Some stitches may be dissolvable, but often stitches on the skin need removal after a week. Most skin lesions can be removed and repaired in this simple way.
- If there is not enough loose skin next to the hole to allow the edges to be stitched directly, a neighbouring area of skin can be partly lifted and moved to fill in the hole. This “flap” is then stitched into place. A combination of dissolvable and removable stitches is often used. If it is necessary to raise a flap, this does leave a larger scar, but wherever possible, the flap will be designed so that the scar lies in natural skin creases.
- If a large area of skin has been removed, it may be necessary to repair the wound with a piece of skin taken from elsewhere. Such a “graft” is often taken from behind the ear or just above the collarbone. These sites are chosen because they already have an excess of skin. The graft is then laid over the area where the facial lesion has been removed and sewn into place. A dressing is put over the graft for around 10 days.

The best method of skin closure for you will be discussed before you sign any consent form for your operation.

### What should I expect afterwards?

There will be some mild pain and discomfort once the numbness from the local anaesthetic injection wears off. You may need to take simple painkillers (e.g., aspirin, ibuprofen). There is

a variable amount of swelling and bruising, which tends to be worse for the first few days after surgery but usually settles after a fortnight.

### **Do I need to take any time off work?**

If you have a local anaesthetic, you can drive yourself to and from the hospital on the day of your operation. Depending on the type of work you do, it may be best to take the rest of the day off. If the lesion to be removed is close to your eye, it would be best to bring someone with you to drive you home in case your vision is affected by any swelling.

### **What are the possible problems?**

Bleeding is uncommon. Should it occur, it can usually be stopped by applying pressure over the area for at least 10 minutes with a rolled-up handkerchief or swab. Infection is also uncommon, but if the doctor carrying out the surgery thinks it might happen, you will be given an antibiotic ointment or tablets.

### **Will I need further appointments?**

You will need any dressings or stitches removed, and an appointment for this will be arranged before you leave the hospital. It is important to keep any dressings or stitches dry until they are removed. It is routine for any skin lesions to be sent for examination under a microscope so that we can tell you what the lesion was and whether it has been completely removed. This test takes time, and the results may not be available for a couple of weeks.