

Patient Information

Information For People Before They Come For Minor Skin Surgery

(also known as Dermatology Minor Operations / Minor Ops
/ Minor Surgery)

The purpose of this leaflet is to give you information about what to expect when you come to the Dermatology Department for Minor Skin Surgery. Minor Skin Surgery is often also called a 'Minor Op'.

Please read the information carefully. This information may, for example, help you decide whether you need somebody to come with you to your Skin Surgery appointment. You may need somebody either to accompany you or to drive you home after the surgery.

Introduction

These notes are to help prepare you for what to expect when you come for your Minor Skin Surgery appointment.

Risks, Benefits and Alternatives

Benefits and Alternatives

The Doctor or Specialist Dermatology Nurse will have explained to you the benefits of the Minor Skin Surgery you are to have, and discussed alternatives, when they referred you for surgery in a Clinic Appointment.

Risks

All types of surgery carry an element of risk, the Doctor will explain to you on the day any risks associated with the Minor Skin Surgery you are to have.

What should you expect when you come for Minor Skin Surgery?

- It is a good idea to have something to eat and drink before you come for Minor Surgery, so that you feel at your strongest.
- There will be one doctor and one nurse working in the Minor Surgery Treatment Room on Clinic 3.
- The nurse or doctor will call you into the room when they are ready to carry out the surgery.
- The doctor doing the surgery will give you information about the surgery, its purpose and any risks, before you are asked to sign a Consent Form to show that you agree to the surgery.
- The doctor and nurse will answer any questions you may have about the surgery throughout the surgical procedure.
- After the procedure, they will give you a leaflet and advice about the surgical wound and how to take care of it, and about what to expect next in terms of test results and possible further treatment.

What do the doctor and nurse need to know about you?

The doctor or nurse will ask you whether:

- You are allergic to any medication or dressing/plasters?
- You have a pacemaker, defibrillator or other electrical implanted device?
- You are on any medication which stops your blood from clotting, such as:
 - Warfarin
 - Aspirin
 - Clopidogrel
 - Apixaban or rivoraxaban
 - Dipyridamole

People Who Are On Warfarin

We will ask people booked for Minor Surgery who are on warfarin to have an INR blood test carried out not more than 48 hours before the surgical appointment. This means that people who are on warfarin should not be asked to come for surgery on a Monday (or the Tuesday after a Bank Holiday weekend). **If you are on warfarin and have been booked for surgery**

on a Monday (or the Tuesday after a Bank Holiday Monday), please call 01743 261000 x3041 or x1107 and ask for your appointment to be changed. Thank you.

Please also tell us if you are very afraid of injections or needles, or if you often faint.

How long does minor skin surgery take?

Minor Skin Surgery will take between 30 and 60 minutes. However, a booked appointment time may overrun, due to unavoidable circumstances.

Can someone go into the treatment room with the person having surgery?

Yes. If the person having surgery wishes, a family member or friend is welcome to sit in the Treatment Room with them during the surgery. One person only may come in with the person having surgery. This is so that the room is not too crowded and also to reduce the risk of infection.

What is the anaesthetic like?

- Injections of a local anaesthetic (pain-killer) are given to fully numb the area where the surgeon will biopsy or remove skin.
- The anaesthetic numbs the area quickly - within about 30 seconds. This numbness usually lasts 2 - 3 hours.
- The anaesthetic injections are sometimes, but not always, painful as they go in. The nurse will help you while the doctor gives the anaesthetic.

Numbing skin before injection in children

- People under the age of 18 and the parents of young children should be offered anaesthetic (EMLA) cream to numb a child's skin before injections.
- EMLA cream should be applied one to two hours before surgery.
- It should be put on skin to be injected, under a clear dressing/plaster.
- If a tube of EMLA cream and dressing are not provided by the doctor or nurse at the appointment when surgery is booked, parent and child may be asked to come to Clinic 3 Reception 1 - 2 hours before their appointment time, to have EMLA applied.

What sorts of minor skin surgery are carried out?

Three main types of Minor Skin Surgery take place in Royal Shrewsbury Hospital Dermatology Clinic.

1. Diagnostic Skin Biopsies:

- a. A '**punch**' biopsy, using a small (4-6 mm) 'apple-corer'-type knife, or
- b. An '**incisional**' biopsy, using a scalpel.

- In both cases, one or more small samples through the whole depth of the skin are taken to be examined in the laboratory.
- These small wounds will usually need one or two stitches (sutures) to stop bleeding.
- The stitch(es) usually stay in for 7 – 10 days and will need to be removed by the Practice Nurse at your GP Surgery.

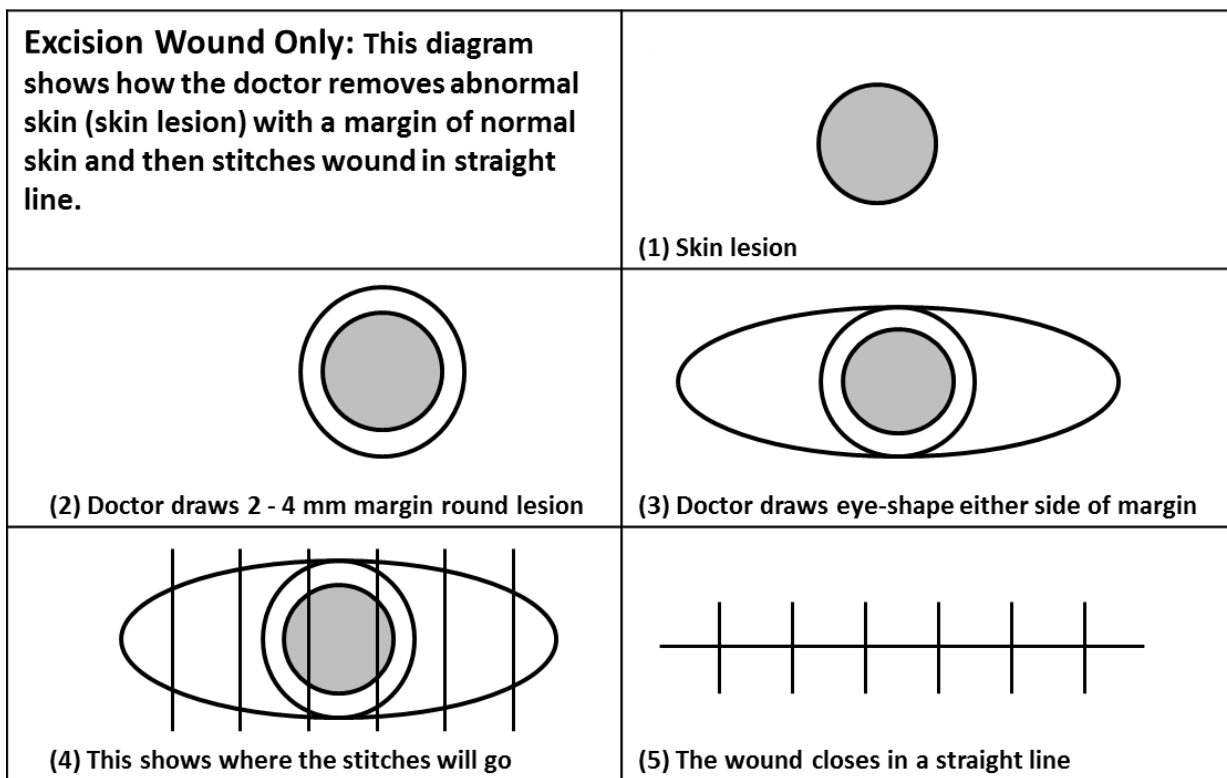
2. Curettage and Cautery (C&C):

- A small circular blade (curette) is used to scrape off an abnormal piece of skin (skin lesion).
- This tissue is sent to be examined in the laboratory.

- The scraped area is then treated with heat from an electric spark (cautery).
- These steps may be repeated to also treat the skin underneath the abnormal piece of skin which has been removed (Therapeutic C & C).
- A shallow burn wound the same size as the base of the skin lesion will be left.
- Like a burn, these wounds can take 2 – 3 weeks to heal.

3. Excision Biopsy:

- A whole area of abnormal skin (lesion) is removed using a scalpel (knife).
- The surgeon will remove with the lesion a 4 mm margin of healthy skin to try and ensure removal of all abnormal cells.
- However, if doctors think that more surgery at the same place may be needed later on, a smaller 2 mm margin of healthy skin round the lesion is taken.
- The full thickness of skin is removed, but not tissue under the skin.
- So that the edges of the wound can be stitched together in a straight line without causing puckering, the piece of skin removed will often be made eye-shaped (see diagram).
- This means that these wounds may be longer than people expect.
- Stitches stay in for between 7 and 14 days, depending on where they are. You will need to make an appointment to have them removed by the Practice Nurse at your GP Surgery. If you are unable to attend your GP surgery easily, we will ask a District Nurse to remove your sutures at your home.



Contact details for more information:

Royal Shrewsbury Hospital Skin Team (Nurses) can be contacted Monday, Tuesday or Thursday on **01743 261000, extension 3041**

Dermatology Secretaries: 01743 261000, extension 1107

Dermatology Web-page:

www.sath.nhs.uk/wards-services/az-services/dermatology

Further information is available from:

Patient Advise and Liaison Service (PALS)

We act on your behalf when handling patient and family concerns, liaising with staff, managers and where appropriate, relevant organisations to negotiate immediate or prompt solutions. We can also help you get support from other local or national agencies.

Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, Tel: 0800 783 0057 or 01743 261691

Princess Royal Hospital, Tel: 01952 282888

Other Sources of Information

NHS 111

A fast and easy way to get the right help, whatever the time. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

Telephone: 111 (free from a landline or mobile)

Website: www.nhs.uk

Patient UK

Provides leaflets on health and disease translated into 11 other languages as well as links to national support/self-help groups and a directory of UK health websites.

Website: www.patient.info

Shropshire Self-help Groups

<http://search3.openobjects.com/kb5/shropshire/cd/selfhelpgroup.page>

Special Needs Information

This leaflet is available in larger text and in other languages upon request.

Website: www.sath.nhs.uk

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