

MASSAPEQUA DERMATOLOGY, PLLC

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Liquid Nitrogen Cryosurgery After Care

Your doctor uses liquid nitrogen (a freezing technique) to remove troublesome or unwanted skin lesions (abnormal growths). Freezing destroys the lesion by first causing it to crust or blister and then to peel as it heals. Your doctor can easily remove what remains of the dried lesion. Sometimes more than one treatment is needed to remove a large or deep lesion.

The treatment and its after effects:

The doctor will apply liquid nitrogen to your skin with a small sprayer or cotton swab. You will feel a stinging or burning sensation that usually only lasts 20-30 minutes; by this time, the treated area will turn red. After an hour or two, you should have no further discomfort, except for some slight tenderness that may last several days. If you do have pain that is not relieved by 2 tablets of acetaminophen every four hours, please contact the office.

Although the frozen skin thaws within a few minutes after liquid nitrogen is applied, it may take 24 hours for a blister to form. The blister may or may not look like a blister resulting from a burn; it will probably be deeper and have a thicker covering. It may contain some blood, which will give it a red or purple tint; this is nothing to worry about.

It is not necessary for a blister to form for the treatment to be effective. Often, the only visible change in the skin will be the formation of a crust on the surface which peels as the area heals.

Care of the blister or crust:

1. Let the crust or blister heal naturally if you can. Once the blister is broken or punctured; you will have to take special precautions to avoid infection.
2. Avoid activities that will irritate the blister or crust. If the blister has not broken, it is all right to get the area wet while bathing or doing dishes.
3. Do not apply moisturizing creams or lotions to the crust or blister during the healing phase.

Follow-up visits:

If an additional visit is necessary, the doctor will examine the crust or dried blister, and determine whether further treatment is necessary. Liquid nitrogen cryosurgery leaves a white scar that's usually smaller-but sometimes as large-as the unwanted skin lesion. Cutting out the lesion, an alternative approach used in some cases, leaves a thin line of scar tissue.