



Removal of facial skin lesions

Information for patients from the Oral and Maxillo Facial Department

This leaflet aims to improve your understanding of your future treatment and answers many common questions. If you have any other questions that the leaflet does not answer or would like further explanation, please ask a member of staff.

Why have I been given this leaflet?

You have a lesion on the skin of your face/neck that needs to be removed. It will already have been discussed with you that this is the best form of treatment, rather than using creams, lotions, or freezing the area.

Will the procedure hurt?

The removal involves using a local anaesthetic (you will be awake but the area will be numbed) so you will feel no pain.

What does the operation involve?

The local anaesthetic will be injected into the area; this will take a few minutes to work. An antiseptic solution may then be used to clean the area and a special ink used to mark out the piece of skin to be removed.

How long does the procedure take?

The amount of time that the removal takes will depend on the size of the area involved but usually it takes between 40 and 60 minutes.



Is anything done after the lesion is removed?

Removal of the lesion leaves a hole in your skin. The hole can be repaired in one of three ways.

- If the hole is small, the surrounding skin can be gently pulled together with stitches. Some of these stitches may be dissolvable (they will not need to be removed) but often stitches on the skin will need to be removed after a week (at your follow-up appointment). 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, then the skin near the affected area can be partly lifted and moved round to fill in the hole. This 'flap' is then stitched into place. Once again, a combination of dissolvable and removable stitches will be used. If it necessary to raise a flap this does leave a larger scar, but whenever possible the flap will be designed so that the scar lies within your natural skin creases.
- If a large area of skin has been removed it may be necessary to repair your wound with a piece of skin from elsewhere. Such a graft is often taken from behind your ear or just around your collarbone. These areas 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 in to place. A dressing is then put over the graft for around 10 days.

Which of the above procedures is used to repair the hole in your skin will be discussed with you before your procedure. You will have a chance to ask any questions at this stage, before you are asked to sign a consent form for treatment. Remember you can withdraw your consent for treatment at any time.

How will I feel afterwards?

There will be some mild pain and discomfort once the anaesthetic has worn off. You may need to take simple painkillers (such as paracetamol). There will be some swelling and bruising for the first few days after surgery but this will usually settle within two weeks.

Can I drive after my surgery?

You should not drive on the same day as your surgery. Where possible arrange for someone to collect you from hospital and drive you home. There is a slight risk you may be disorientated (confused or unable to think clearly) after your surgery, as the procedure was carried out on your face and you had local anaesthetic injections.

Do I need to take time off work?

Depending on the type of work you do, it may be best to take the rest of the day off, but this can be discussed with your doctor.

What are the risks/complications?

- **Bleeding** is not common but if it happens it can usually be stopped by applying pressure to the area for 10 minutes with a rolled up handkerchief or swab.
- **Infection** is also unlikely but if the doctor carrying out the surgery thinks it may happen you will be given antibiotic ointment or tablets to take home.

If you have any concerns please speak to your GP.

Will I need a follow-up appointment?

You will need to have your dressing and stitches removed (unless they are dissolvable) and an appointment for this will be arranged before you leave hospital. It is important to keep any dressing or stitches dry until they are removed, unless you have been told otherwise.

After your procedure, skin lesions are sent off for examination (this is normal) so that we can tell you what the lesion was and whether it has been completely removed. This test takes time to carry out and the results may not be available for a couple of weeks.

Further information

If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to your doctor at the hospital.

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 78 31 45, or email ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net

Patients should not bring in large sums of money or valuables into hospital. Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property had been handed in to Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals web site www.ekhufft.nhs.uk/patientinformation