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Removal of Facial Skin Lesion



Patient information

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Excellent patient care, together

This leaflet has been designed to improve your understanding of your forthcoming treatment and has answers to many of the commonly asked questions. Please ask if you have any other questions would like further explanation please ask.

The problem

You have a lesion on the skin of your face that requires diagnostic sampling or removal. It will have already 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, ie: you are going to be awake but the area will be numb so that you feel no pain.

What does the procedure involve?

An antiseptic solution may then be used to clean the area and special ink used to mark out the piece of skin to be removed. First the area in and around the skin lesion will be numbed with a local anaesthetic injection. This takes a few minutes to work and can feel like a stinging sensation. The amount of time that the removal and closure takes obviously varies depending on the size of the area involved but typically it may take between 30-45 minutes.

Is anything done after the area is removed?

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

- **Stitches:** If the hole is small the surrounding skin can be gently pulled together with stitches. Some of these stitches may be resorbable but often stitches on the skin need removal after a week.
- **Skin flap:** If there is not enough loose skin next to the hole to allow the edges to be stitched directly then a neighbouring area of skin can be partly lifted and moved round to fill the hole. This “flap” is then stitched into place. Once again combinations of dissolvable and removable stitches are often used. If it is necessary to raise a flap this does not leave a larger scar but whenever possible the flap will be designed such that the scar lies in natural skin creases.
- **Graft:** 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.

Care for your surgical wound:

- Keep the area completely dry for 48 hours.
- After this, the area can be gently washed once a day, and you can apply a thin smear of ointment
- If the wound starts to bleed, apply firm continuous pressure for 30 minutes with a rolled-up handkerchief or gauze. Slight bleeding in the few hours after surgery is common and is aggravated by activity. Hot drinks or bending down can cause bleeding, especially on facial wounds.

- Swelling and bruising are common, especially after facial surgery, and can be lessened by the use of an ice pack.
- Use extra pillows after facial surgery and elevate the leg after lower limb surgery.
- Do not use make-up near a wound until the surface has completely healed.
- Avoid swimming until the stitches are removed to also prevent risk of infection. The scar will be strong by 30 days – and is at its weakest during the first few days after the stitches have been removed. Too much activity can put strain on the healing scar. This can lead to stretching of the scar or bursting of the wound
- Alcohol – do not drink any alcohol for 24 hours after the operation.

Pain care:

- When the local anaesthetic wears off after two to three hours, the area may be uncomfortable. Take two paracetamol (500mg) tablets every four to six hours (a maximum of eight tablets in 24 hours).
- It is better to avoid aspirin or ibuprofen as pain relief on the day of the procedure as occasionally they can contribute to bleeding.

The scar

- The scar will be strong by 30 days – and is at its weakest during the first few days after the stitches have been removed. Too much activity can put strain on the healing scar. This can lead to stretching of the scar or bursting of the wound.
- All skin surgery results in permanent scar formation. Scar tissue is red for three to six months and then usually fades to white. The appearance of a scar usually improves over 12 months as it 'matures'.

Removal of stitches

This will be between 10-14 days after the procedure. This can either be done by our OMFS department or at your GP surgery.

Do I need to take time off work?

- With local anaesthetic then 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 that you are going to have removed is close to your eye it would be best if you could bring somebody with you to drive you home in case your vision is altered by any swelling.

Will I need further appointments?

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. We will follow you up with the results in the coming weeks as this test takes time to carry out. A follow up will also be arranged if we need to remove any of the stitches for you.

How to contact us

Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery

[Watford General Hospital](#)

Vicarage Road

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Hertfordshire WD1 8HB

Monday to Friday, 9.00am – 5.00pm

Tel: 01923 217205

Hospital switchboard: 01923 244366 - Ext. 3855

After 5pm and at weekends

Northwick Park Hospital

Tel: 020 8864 3232

Ask for bleep number 900, ask for the Oral Surgery SHO on call

Taken from The British Association of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeons website. www.baoms.org.uk

PALS

If you need this leaflet in another **language, large print, Braille or audio version**, please call **01923 217198** or email westherts.pals@nhs.net.



Language



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Survey - Friends and Family Test

We welcome feedback about your care, this feedback is shared with all staff we can improve patients' experience. Click this [link](#) or use the QR code with your smartphone.



For more information, on our Patient Advice and Liaison Service, visit our [website](#).

Or type in: bit.ly/4o3QVFJ

Where can I park?

Car parking at Watford General Hospital is available in the [multi-storey car park](#). It's pay on exit, so you only pay for the time you need. You can pay by cash or card. The post code for the car park is **WD18 0LT**.

The external car park ticket machines on all sites **only accept cash**. However, you can pay by card via the [Saba parking app](#) (excluding AMEX), or search Saba parking app at the [App store](#) or [Google play](#).

Please note: due to current redevelopment works at St Albans, parking is very limited.

For more information about travelling to our sites and travel concessions, visit our [website](#).

Department	Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery
Ratified / review date	Aug 2025 / Aug 2028
ID number	38-2462-V1