

What To Expect After Removal of Skin Lesions

Risks

Risks of surgery are:

- Bleeding
- Infection (you may receive antibiotics at the time of the procedure, to reduce the risk of infection)
- Pain

Recovery

Mild inflammation, including localized pain and redness at the wound borders (which steadily recede over time), is to be expected during the healing process. However, more severe wound infections require prompt medical attention.

Recovery time depends on the location and number of lesions removed:

- Most people will be able to return to normal activities within 1 to 3 days
- Healing takes 2 to 4 weeks
- Scarring or, in most cases, transient depigmentation (white splotch) may occur

Call Your Doctor

For men and women who have had skin lesions removed, call your doctor for any of the following:

- Bleeding that lasts longer than 1 week
- Fever and/or chills
- Pain increasing in severity
- Red streaks and/or warm skin around the wound
- Bad-smelling or yellow-green discharge, which may indicate an infection
- Nausea and/or vomiting

Aftercare

Remove the bandage/band-aid (if applicable) after 1-3 days, when the localized bleeding and/or the painful phase of inflammation have subsided. Cover the area with triple-antibiotic ointment or Aquaphor® 3 to 5 times a day. Keep the area moist with ointment to prevent scabbing. If a scab forms, do not pick at it. Keep it moist with petroleum-based ointment, e.g., Vaseline®, Aquaphor®, or triple-antibiotic ointment, until it dissolves.

For Patients with Genital HPV Infections Only

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is the virus that causes genital warts. Treating genital warts does not necessarily cure an infection. The virus may remain in the body in an inactive state after warts are removed. A person treated for genital warts may still be able to spread the infection.

Avoid sexual intercourse, at least until the treated area heals and soreness is gone (usually 1 to 3 weeks, depending on the size of the area treated). Some experts say that you should consider yourself contagious for 4 months following the removal or treatment of the last lesion. Hence, abstinence from sex during these 4 months is probably the best advice. Condoms may help reduce the risk of HPV infection, but they do not protect the entire genital area against skin-to-skin contact.

According to "A Clinician's Guide to Sexual Devices: What We Didn't Learn in School", human papillomavirus (HPV) can persist on devices containing porous materials (e.g., inexpensive rubber polymers), even after proper cleaning and disinfection. Some sexual devices may need to be thrown away or covered with a condom before they can be considered safe for reuse.