

What is Cryotherapy and What Can I Expect?

- Cryotherapy is the treatment used for sunspots (solar keratoses) and occasionally very shallow skin cancers or other benign lesions.
- Cryotherapy is also known as cryosurgery, freezing or liquid nitrogen.
- Liquid nitrogen is sprayed onto the skin for 1 to 5 seconds depending on the thickness of the lesion and the location on your skin.
- After treatment the areas will become red and swollen and may blister. The blisters are usually painless and should be left alone
- The redness or blister will last a few days and then a crust will form in its place.
- The crusts will usually last a week on the face but may last two to three weeks on the rest of the body. They will fall off when ready and leave a pink area of healing new skin underneath.
- Once the healing is complete, the area treated may sometimes become a lighter or darker colour than the surrounding skin and the discolouration may be temporary or permanent. This is an unpredictable complication and more pronounced on darker skin types. Vitamin E cream applied after the crusts have fallen can help to minimize discolouration. Scratching or picking the lesions may worsen the discolouration and lengthen healing time.
- If the lesions become infected (rare) with pus, redness, pain and excessive swelling, then it may suffice to dab the lesions, twice daily, with an antiseptic (Dettol, iodine or methylated spirits) to disinfect or dry the lesions. If severe, please return to the clinic.
- Showers are allowed, but not baths or swimming. Please avoid scrubbing the lesions or having the shower spray forcefully onto the blisters or crusts. The crusts will dry spontaneously an hour or two after your shower.
- Swelling may occur with treatment around the eyes and lips but will settle in a few days.
- Please avoid make-up, powders or creams until the crust has fallen off.
- Occasionally, second treatments are required
- In summary, leaving the lesions alone after treatment will give the best results