The Skin Clinic
Skin Check
Keeping you well!
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What is Curette and Cautery and What Can I Expect?

- The curette is an instrument that “scrapes” away the bulk of some skin cancers. Normal tissue is usually not affected by curetting.

- The Cautery (or diathermy) part of the procedure allows the surgeon to seal off any bleeding and at the same time “mop up” any residual tumour cells not removed by curetting.

- “C and C”, as it is known, is used for superficial BCCs and superficial SCCs especially when these occur away from the face. In experienced hands, it may also be used on small nodular BCCs and small invasive SCCs.

  The resulting wound heals slowly by itself and generally results in a flat white scar. This scar is generally more superior to a surgical scar on body areas such as limbs and trunk, especially for larger superficial skin cancers, but a surgical scar will generally be cosmetically superior on the face and neck.

  A biopsy is always able to be obtained from the curetted tissue which is then sent away for pathological diagnosis. Further procedure may be required once the specimen has been histopathologically examined.

  Curettage, without Cautery, may also be used for a wide variety of benign skin lesions.

- Following curettage a follow up appointment should be made with the doctor in around 3 months to ensure the cancer has been fully removed.

- If the lesion takes more than 4 weeks to heal or is growing then please arrange to see the doctor who performed the procedure

- After curette it is important to ensure the wound is kept clean and dry for at least 3 days before the dressing can be softened with Vaseline and gently removed.

- Thereafter do not reapply a dressing unless specifically advised by your treating doctor.

- Apply Vaseline to the wound three times daily and do not cover the area.

- If the wound looks moist or red then apply betadine ointment for a few days only before returning to Vaseline.

- If redness persists, the wound becomes painful or smells then please arrange to see one of our nurses or doctor immediately as you may require antibiotics.