



Dermatology (skin) surgery

What to expect during and after an operation on your skin.

What to expect after a dermatology (skin) surgery

- This will be an operation using a local anaesthetic (you are awake but the area is numbed).
- The local anaesthetic injections may cause you slight discomfort, depending on where the injection is given, but this discomfort only lasts a few seconds.
- The numbing of the anaesthetic only removes pain – you may still be aware of touching and pulling sensations. The numbness will last approximately 45-60 minutes.
- Any surgery to the skin will lead to some form of scar. In some areas, especially on the shoulders, upper back and chest, scars may temporarily become thickened, red and possibly sore and/or itchy, but this can be treated if it occurs. In addition, in some areas under tension, scars may spread, resulting in them being wider than they were immediately after the operation. Unfortunately, this is unavoidable.
- All surgery to the skin inevitably cuts small nerves. You may experience numbness, pins and needles or other sensations around or near the wound after surgery. This may last for some weeks, and occasionally months. A painkiller such as Paracetamol will help to control this.
- Post-operative pain varies from patient to patient, and also depends on what sort of operation you have had. Often, a painkiller such as Paracetamol will help to control this.
- Several routinely prescribed medications, such as Warfarin, may increase the risk of bleeding during and after your operation. If you think you are on any such medications and have not informed your dermatologist of this at the time of the initial consultation, then please let us know as soon as possible.
- If you are on Warfarin, you will need to have your INR checked less than 7 days before your surgery. If permitted by your 'target range', the INR should be below 3.0 in order for us to proceed. If you are taking Aspirin or Clopidogrel, please inform your dermatologist but continue taking them as normal. If you are taking another anticoagulant (blood thinning) medication, such as, but not limited to Dabigatran, Rivaroxaban or Apixaban, then you should have had instructions on managing your medication before the operation, at the time of your initial consultation with the dermatologist. If you need further clarification, please contact the clinical admin team – contact details at the end of this leaflet.
- Smoking reduces blood flow to the skin as well as to many other organs. If you are having a complex skin operation or skin graft, **you must stop smoking** to maximise the chances of a good result. For smoking cessation advice, speak to your GP or visit the ['Quit smoking - Better Health'](#) page of the NHS website.

- Wound infections are uncommon (around 2-3%, 2 or 3 out of every 100 patients), but must be treated as soon as possible with an oral antibiotic to prevent serious damage to the wound and a subsequent poor cosmetic result. Persistent pain and redness may be an indication of a wound infection. If you think your wound might be infected, please contact your GP or call NHS 111 to arrange for the wound to be reviewed.
- A reaction to the materials used in the sutures (stitches) is unusual, unpredictable and can occur many weeks after surgery. Reactions are more likely to happen with long lasting suture materials that are left in the skin for support purposes. The main sign of a reaction is a persistent or growing swelling or lump at the site of the surgery.
- **Please arrange for someone to collect you following your procedure.** Your driving abilities may be impaired following a local anaesthetic, especially if surgery was on your arms, legs or face, particularly near the eyes. The validity of your car insurance will be at risk if you choose to drive and then have an accident. This is why we recommend that you **do not drive** immediately after the operation.
- Please feel free to discuss any questions or worries you may have with your doctor or contact the clinical admin team, using the details below

Contacting us

Dermatology Clinical Admin Team (CAT 8): 0118 322 8145 (Option 1) or email:

rbb-tr.cat8dermatology@nhs.net

Dermatology (West Berkshire Community Hospital): 01635 273417.

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

RBFT Department of Dermatology, February 2025

Next review due: February 2027