

Minor operative procedures

What does a minor operative procedure involve?

Some facts you may find helpful:

- The local anaesthetic injections may cause you slight discomfort depending on where the injection is given but this discomfort only lasts a few moments.
- The numbness 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, scars, especially on the shoulders, upper back and chest, may temporarily become thickened, red and possibly sore and/or itchy, but this can be treated. In addition, scars in some areas under tension may spread so the resultant scar is wider than it was immediately after the operation. Little can be done to prevent this.
- 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 the pain may be surprisingly slight. Large wounds and wounds in areas subject to pressure (e.g. foot) or excessive movement (e.g. shoulder) may cause you more discomfort. Again, 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 are on Warfarin you will need to have your INR checked 2-3 days before your surgery and the INR should be below 3.0 in order for us to proceed. If you are taking Aspirin, Clopidogrel or one of the new anticoagulant medications, such as Dabigatran/Rivaroxaban/Apixaban, inform your dermatologist but continue taking them as normal.
- 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 should stop smoking to maximise the chances of a good result.
- Wound infections are uncommon, 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.

- 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. A reaction may manifest itself as a persistent or growing swelling or lump.
- Please arrange for someone to collect you following your minor operation. Your driving abilities may be impaired following a local anaesthetic, so we recommend that you do not drive immediately after the procedure.

Please feel free to discuss any questions or worries you may have with your doctor.

Contact us

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www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

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Department of Dermatology
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