

Maxillo Facial Department

Cryotherapy

What is Cryotherapy?

The term Cryotherapy literally means “treatment using low temperature” and refers to the removal of lesions by freezing them. The most common agents currently used by doctors are Carbon Dioxide or liquid nitrogen.

What conditions can be treated with Cryotherapy?

A wide variety of superficial benign lesions can be treated with Cryotherapy. In the mouth it is usually used to treat vascular malformations (collections of blood vessels) or mucus cysts. Cryotherapy can cause these to shrink away or disappear.

What does the procedure involve?

Cryotherapy is applied using a metal probe. Sometimes local anaesthetic is used. The tissue is usually frozen two to three times, each one lasting from 30 seconds to one minute.

Some patients may require this procedure to be repeated at a future appointment

Is there any alternative to this treatment?

If the lesion is not thought to be dangerous or causing problems, it can sometimes be left alone. Sometimes the lesion can be removed surgically. Your surgeon will discuss this if they feel it is appropriate.

How will I feel after treatment?

In the first few days after treatment, the area will become swollen. This can be quite marked. The swelling can last three to five days. Sometimes a blister may form which may burst naturally or can be burst with a sterile



Patient Information

pin. A scab may form and this will take one to two weeks (and occasionally a little longer) to come away. Cryotherapy can be painful and it may well be necessary to take some painkillers (e.g. Paracetamol or Ibuprofen) for a few days.

If the mouth has been treated, it is best to stick to a soft diet, such as soups and mashed potatoes for a few days. Take care not to knock the area with your toothbrush.

Risks/Side effects

- Pigment changes can happen in the skin around the site. It may darken or lighten in colour. This usually improves with time but may be permanent.
- Numbness of the area is possible but normally goes in time.
- Scarring rarely occurs if deep freeze has been necessary.

Will I be off work and for how long?

Most people will be able to go back to work straight away. However as you may be visibly swollen in the mouth or face area, you may want to take a couple of days off, especially if work involves lots of talking or presentations.

Review appointment

Normally you will be given a review appointment so that the surgeon can check how successful Cryotherapy has been. Sometimes a further session may be necessary or occasionally the affected area may need to be removed surgically.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact 024 7696 6500 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy

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