



What you need to know about Cryotherapy

Cryotherapy, also known as cryosurgery, cryoablation or targeted cryoblation therapy refers to the application of extreme cold liquid to freeze and destroy diseased tissue. Freezing may be the most suitable way of getting rid of many different kinds of surface skin lesions.

- The goal of cryotherapy is to freeze and destroy targeted skin growths while protecting the surrounding skin from injury.
- Cryotherapy is a “spot” treatment for defined lesions, while other treatments options are available to treat larger areas or hidden lesions.
- Cryotherapy is a common procedure often performed in the physician’s office

How does it work?

- The spray technique involves a device which directs a small spray of liquid nitrogen directly onto the skin growth. Freezing may last 5 to 20 seconds, depending on the lesion size. A second freeze/thaw cycle may be required

What can I expect after treatment?

- Cryotherapy stings and may be painful during the treatment and for a short time afterwards.
- Redness, swelling and the formation of a blister at the site are common after treatment.
- A small bandage may be applied if fluid oozes from the treatment site.

What are the advantages of cryotherapy?

- Cryotherapy is less invasive than surgery.
- Cryotherapy targets a limited area and avoids the destruction of nearby healthy issue.
- Pain, bleeding and other complications that may be caused by surgery are minimized.
- A cryotherapy in-office procedure usually results in a shorter recovery time than other surgical treatments.
- Cryotherapy boasts high success rates in permanent removal of skin lesions.

What are the disadvantages of cryotherapy?

- Cryotherapy can only be used to treat lesions that are visible.
- Possible scarring, hypopigmentation (loss of skin color) or hyperpigmentation (dark spots) can occur.
- Repeated treatments over several weeks may be necessary to prevent the lesion’s return
- Lesions may recur.

What are the risks of cryotherapy?

- Cryotherapy poses little risks and can be well-tolerated by patients who are not good candidates for other surgical procedures.
- As with other surgical procedures, there is some risk of scarring, infection and damage to underlying skin and tissues. These are generally minimal in the hands of a skilled physicians, healthcare providers and physician’s assistants.
- Sometimes, cryotherapy results in hypopigmentation, hyperpigmentation, or a scar when freezing has been deep or prolonged.
- A deep prolonged freeze to the skin overlying a superficial sensory nerve, such as treatment to a lesion on the side of a finger, may result in numbness that will usually lessen gradually in a few weeks or months.

What are the side effects of cryotherapy?

- Cold/pain- an immediate and severe sensation of cold which will cause pain may occur while freezing the skin.
- Redness usually occurs within half an hour.
- Edema (swelling near the area being treated) may be visible within an hour.
- Pain is not usually extreme after the immediate discomfort of treatment. Ibuprofen is usually sufficient for relief if needed.
- A treatment of multiple lesions on the scalp may cause short-term headache.
- Blistering is more likely to occur with longer treatments and is commonly associated with treatment on hands and feet.
- Bacterial infection is very rare. If increased pain or redness occurs 3 days or more after treatment, consult your physician.