

Liquid Nitrogen (Cryotherapy)

What is liquid nitrogen?

- Liquid nitrogen is a **very** cold liquid. Treatment with liquid nitrogen is called **cryotherapy**.
- Liquid nitrogen is used to kill skin cells by freezing them. It is often used to treat skin lesions (sores), like:
 - › Actinic keratoses (rough, scaly patches)
 - › Warts
 - › Skin tags
 - › Molluscum (round, firm, painless bumps)

What will happen during treatment?

- Liquid nitrogen is sprayed over the top of a skin lesion. This can cause a burning or stinging feeling.

After treatment

- After a few minutes, you may see redness and swelling around the treated area.
- Within 24 hours (1 day), a scab or blister may form. This is common.
- The scab or blister can vary in colour from clear to black. It may also be crusty or filled with fluid. This is normal. It may take a week or up to a month for the scab to heal.
- The scab or blister may be sore for the first few days after treatment. You may leave it open to the air or cover it with a bandage to protect it.
- You can use a barrier like Vaseline® over the treated area. This will help to protect it and help it heal.
- It is OK to wash the area gently with a mild soap and water.
 - › **Do not** scrub or pick your scab or blister.

- The treated area may be lighter or darker than your usual skin tone for a few months after treatment. You may also have a small scar that is lighter than your usual skin colour. This is normal. Protect the treated area from the sun while it is healing.

If you have any of these signs of a possible infection:

- › Red streaks
- › More soreness
- › Yellow discharge (pus)

Call the Dermatology nursing line:

- › Phone: 902-473-7194

If you cannot reach the nurse, call your primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner) or go to a walk-in clinic.

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find all patient education resources here:
www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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