

CRYOTHERAPY: “FREEZING” WITH LIQUID NITROGEN

ABOUT

Liquid nitrogen is an extremely cold substance (-320.44°F) used to treat various skin disorders such as warts, precancerous lesions, irritated seborrheic keratoses, sun spots, and more.

PROCEDURE

A cotton-tipped applicator saturated with liquid nitrogen is touched to the lesion for 5-10 seconds. This causes a localized frostbite on the skin resulting in a stinging or burning sensation while it is in place and for approximately one minute afterwards. As the skin thaws, you may experience painful throbbing for an additional 5-10 minutes.

EXPECTATIONS AND CARE

Like with any burn or frostbite, you can expect discomfort for a few hours to days, redness, and depending on the depth possibly a water or blood blister formation within 24 hours. You may take over the counter medications such as Advil or Tylenol to help alleviate any discomfort. If the blister is painful, you may also puncture it with a sterile needle and allow the fluid to drain, then cover with antibiotic ointment and a bandage. Otherwise, you may leave it alone and it will drain on its own eventually.

The lesion(s) should eventually dry up and fall off within 1-2 weeks on face/scalp/neck/trunk and 2-4 weeks on extremities. Once it peels off, you can expect the areas to slowly fade from a pinkish color, to possibly white or slightly hypopigmented, and finally to your normal skin tone.

Warts may turn black during the first week and fall off within 1 to 4 weeks. Often, however, the blister calluses and does not peel by its own. Instead, it would require assistance in paring down to determine if any of the wart remains.

After a liquid nitrogen treatment, you may wash the area as normal. Makeup and moisturizer may be applied over the treated sites, if desired.

FOLLOW UP

It may take several applications to cure your skin issue. If the skin problem is still present 4-6 weeks after it was treated, call the office to schedule a follow-up appointment.

RISKS

Temporary discomfort
Blister/scabbing lasting 1-2 weeks on face/scalp/neck/trunk
Blister/scabbing lasting 2-4 week on extremities
Hyperpigmentation
Hypopigmentation