LIQUID NITROGEN CARE INSTRUCTIONS

Liquid nitrogen is a cold, liquified gas with a temperature of 196 degrees below zero Celsius (minus 321 degrees Fahrenheit). It is used to freeze and destroy superficial skin growths such as warts and keratoses. It can also be used to treat precancerous skin lesions known as actinic keratoses. Liquid nitrogen causes stinging and pain while the growth is being frozen and as the skin thaws. The discomfort usually lasts less than thirty minutes. Sometimes, a mild residual throbbing pain will last a few hours.

After liquid nitrogen treatment, your skin will become swollen and red. You may develop a blister during the first 24 hours. Eventually, a scab will form at the treatment site. This scab will fall off by itself in one to three weeks. The goal is for the unwanted growth to come off with the scab.

If a lesion was treated near your eye, you may notice swelling of one or both lids within 24 hours. Your lids may become partially closed. This reaction is harmless and will not affect your vision. This condition will resolve by itself in a day or two.

Generally, no special care is needed after liquid nitrogen treatment. You can wash your skin as usual and use make-up or other cosmetics immediately after treatment. If clothing irritates the area, cover it with a small bandage.

If a very large or uncomfortable blister develops, you may open it with a sterilized needle. The needle can be sterilized by wiping with rubbing alcohol. Gently clean the blistered area with soap and water followed by rubbing alcohol. Insert the needle into the edge of the blister to allow the blister contents to escape. Press the blister gently to force out the fluid or blood. This will reduce pain caused by blister fluid pressure. If a blister reforms, it may be drained again. Do not remove the top of the blister as it will act as a natural barrier and help prevent infection as the area heals. Protect open sores or punctured blisters with over-the-counter Polysporin antibiotic ointment applied daily under an bandage or non-stick dressing (Telfa).

Over-the-counter Tylenol or Ibuprofen may be used to control the pain after liquid nitrogen treatment. If you notice signs of infection such as oozing pus, spreading redness, excessive swelling or increased pain usually appearing 2 days or more after the office treatment, please call the office (636-561-3277).

Sometimes liquid nitrogen does not completely remove the growth and it will need to be retreated. This is especially true of larger warts which may require numerous treatments. If the growth is still present after the blister heals and you do not have a scheduled follow-up appointment, please call to make a return appointment (636-561-3277).