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You are entitled to a copy of any letter we write about you. Please ask if you want one when you come to the hospital.

If you are unhappy with the advice you have been given by your GP, consultant, or another healthcare professional, you may ask for a second (or further) opinion.

The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email: patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk if you would like a reference list.

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Removal of a Facial Skin Lesion *(page 1 of 2)*

This leaflet has been designed to improve your understanding of your planned treatment and contains answers to many common questions. If you have any other questions or would like further explanation please ask a member of the medical or nursing staff.

The problem

You have a lesion on your face that needs to be removed. It will already have been discussed with you that this is the best form of treatment rather than using creams, lotions or freezing the area. The removal involves the use of a local anaesthetic, that is you will be awake but the area will be numb so that you feel no pain.

What does the operation involve?

First the area in and around the skin lesion will be frozen with a local anaesthetic injection. This takes a few minutes to work. An antiseptic solution may then be used to clean the area and special ink used to mark out the piece of skin to be removed. The amount of time that the removal takes obviously varies depending on the size of the area involved but typically it may take between 20 and 30 minutes.

Is anything done after the lesion is removed?

Removal of the lesion leaves a hole in the skin. This hole can be repaired in one of 3 ways:

- if the hole is small the surrounding skin can be gently pulled together with stitches. Some of these stitches may be dissolvable but often stitches on the skin need to be removed in 7 days. Most skin lesions can be removed and repaired in this simple way.
- if there is not enough loose skin next to the hole to allow the edges to be stitched directly then a neighbouring area of skin can be partially lifted and moved round to fill in the hole. This 'flap' is then stitched into place. Once again a combination of dissolvable and removable stitches is often used. If it is necessary to raise a flap this does leave a larger scar but wherever possible the flap will be designed such that the scar lies in natural skin creases.
- if a large area of skin has been removed it may be necessary to repair the wound with a piece of skin taken from elsewhere. This is known as a 'graft'. Skin is often taken from behind the ear or just above the collarbone. These sites are chosen because they already have an excess of skin. The graft is then laid over the area where

Oral Surgery Department

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the facial lesion has been removed and sewn into place. A dressing is put over the graft for around 10 days.

The method of skin closure which is best for you will be discussed with you before you sign any consent form for your operation.

What should I expect afterwards?

There will be some mild pain and discomfort once the numbness of the local anaesthetic injection has worn off. You may need to take simple painkillers (such as aspirin, Ibuprofen). Please follow the directions on the packet carefully.

There will be a some swelling and bruising which tends to be worse for the first few days after surgery but usually settles down after a fortnight.

Do I need to take any time off work?

If you are having a local anaesthetic you can drive yourself to and from hospital on the day of your operation.

Depending on the type of work you do it may be best to take the rest of the day off.

If the lesion is close to your eye it would be best if you could bring somebody with you to drive you home in case of any problem with your vision due to swelling.

What are the possible problems?

Bleeding is uncommon. Should it occur it can usually be stopped by applying pressure over the area with a rolled up handkerchief or swab for at least 10 minutes.

Infection is also uncommon. If the doctor carrying out the surgery thinks it might happen you will be given an antibiotic ointment or tablets.

Will I need further appointments?

You will obviously need any dressings or stitches removed and an appointment for this will be arranged before you leave hospital.

It is important to keep any dressings or stitches dry until they are removed. It is routine for any skin lesions to be sent for examination under a microscope so that we can tell you what the lesion was and whether it has been completely removed. This test takes time to carry out and the results may not be available for a couple of weeks.

If you experience any problems or have any concerns then please contact the ORAL SURGERY DEPARTMENT 8am - 5pm Mon to Fri 01722 336262 ext 3255.