

Information for Patients

Surgery to remove a benign or harmless skin lesion is a procedure that should only be carried out when specific criteria are met. This is because the medical evidence tells us they will often disappear of their own accord over time and there are risks associated with surgical intervention.

About the condition

A lesion is a general term that we use for things like moles, cysts, skin tags, warts, ulcers and other lumps and bumps we sometimes get on our skin. These lesions might have an impact on our appearance, but are otherwise usually harmless. Some benign lesions, such as warts, may clear up on their own. However, if they don't then your pharmacist can provide useful information on how to manage them.

Treatment to remove skin lesions should only be carried out in certain circumstances and if certain criteria are met. If your GP has concerns or if the lesion persistently catches on your clothing or bleeds recurrently then you can be treated by the GP or referred to an appropriate specialist for an opinion.

As with all treatments, when deciding what's best, you should consider the benefits, the risks, the alternatives and what will happen if you do nothing.

What are the **BENEFITS** of the intervention?

Treatment to remove a skin lesion should only be carried out in certain circumstances, for example, if the lesion is painful, bleeds regularly, if it becomes repeatedly infected or if it impacts on your everyday activities, such as causing pain at your joints or affects your vision.

What are the **RISKS** of the intervention?

Surgical removal carries a small risk of complications such as bleeding, scarring and infection.

What are the **ALTERNATIVES**?

Most benign lesions can be left alone. Your GP or pharmacist can advise you if the lesion is troublesome.

What if you do **NOTHING**?

Most benign skin lesions are little more than a nuisance and are unlikely to cause any harm if you do nothing.

You can find out more about the [NHS Evidence Based Interventions](#) programme online.