

Skin Cancer **CENTER** *of* *Northern Virginia*

□ **Post Biopsy Wound Care Instructions**

Please keep the bandage that we place intact until your next shower. At that time, remove the band-aid, cleanse the wound gently with soap and water, apply a small amount of Vaseline, and then cover with another band-aid. Keeping the wound moist with Vaseline will prevent a thick scab from forming, which allows the wound to heal quickly and will also minimize scarring. We prefer Vaseline to antibiotic ointment because some people are allergic to antibiotic ointment.

Biopsy sites usually take 3-4 weeks to heal. During this time, you should expect the sites to be somewhat tender to the touch – especially in the bath or shower. You should also expect to see a thin rim of redness around the edge of the biopsy site.

If the biopsy site is on your face, and you do not want to wear a bandage, it is especially important to apply Vaseline to the biopsy site 2-3 times a day.

In other locations, like on the back, it will be easier to care for your biopsy site if it is allowed to dry out and form a scab. This is done by cleansing gently with soap and water, but then leaving it uncovered instead of applying Vaseline and a bandage. This approach will delay healing – but it will be easier to care for.

□ **Cryotherapy Wound Care (Liquid Nitrogen Freezing)**

Liquid nitrogen is extremely cold (-350°). When sprayed on or applied to the skin the top skin layer rapidly freezes. When you leave our office, the freezing site will probably be red and swollen, and it may sting and itch as it thaws. Expect the site to look worse over the next few days before it gets better. Swelling and/or blistering often develop within a couple of hours after treatment. 2-3 days after treatment a scab will probably form which will then take 7-10 days to fall off, leaving a pink smooth area.

Instructions:

1. The treatment site may get wet with normal bathing and showering.
2. If a blister or scab forms, do not remove it, but allow it to heal on its own.
3. If crusting develops, cleanse gently with soap and water and apply a thin layer of Vaseline twice daily.

If you have any questions or concerns about the healing of your biopsy or cryotherapy wound, please do not hesitate to call us at (703) 723-5700.