

General advice:

- You may eat and drink normally on the day of your operation.
- It may be advisable to arrange for someone to collect you following the surgery, particularly if the operation is on your head, neck, lower leg or foot.
- If the procedure involves stitches, you may be advised to avoid vigorous exercise, stretching, or any activity which may strain the affected area for up to **four** weeks after surgery.
- You will be advised to keep the wound dry for at least **two** days and avoid swimming for four weeks after surgery.
- If you are having surgery to the lower leg or foot, these wounds take longer to heal. You may be fitted with an elastic sock (Tubigrip) and advised to keep it on for **14** days. It is also important to elevate the leg as much as possible and avoid standing still for long periods of time. Normal walking is fine.
- You may be advised to have your stitches removed at your local GP surgery.

If you need this leaflet in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01923 217 187** or email **westherts.pals@nhs.uk**



Department	Dermatology
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**NHS**

West Hertfordshire
Teaching Hospitals
NHS Trust



A guide to...

Skin Surgery

Patient Information

Dermatology appointment coordinators

Telephone: 07867 668079 / 07824 065479

Email: westherts.dermminorops@nhs.net

Dermatology Department

Watford General Hospital: 01923 217375

Hemel Hempstead Hospital: 01442 287467

St Albans City Hospital: 01727 897837

Your appointment for skin surgery has been arranged on:

Date:

Time:

Duration: **30 mins** **60 mins**

Please report to the main Outpatient reception in:

- Verulam Wing, Hemel Hempstead Hospital**
- Gloucester Wing, St Albans City Hospital**
- Dermatology Centre, Watford General Hospital**

If you need to cancel or change your appointment, please contact us as soon as possible on 07867 668079 or 07824 065479

Description of the possible procedures:

You should already have had a discussion with your dermatologist about the treatment options for your skin problem, including the risks of no treatment, surgery and other available options.

Before the operation is carried out, the procedure will be explained to you and you will be asked to sign a consent form, giving your permission for the procedure. A local anaesthetic, which numbs the skin, will be injected into the skin around the operation site. One or more of the following procedures will then be carried out:

Excision: The skin lesion is cut out from the skin and the wound is stitched and dressed.

Punch biopsy or incisional biopsy: A small sample of skin is taken from the skin lesion or rash, and the wound is stitched and dressed.

Curettage and cautery/Shave excision: The skin lesion is scraped or shaved off and the wound is sealed with heat (cautery). There are no stitches, but the wound will require a dressing.

The potential risks of these procedures include: a small risk of infection, bleeding and bruising, delayed healing, wound breakdown, poor scarring and incomplete removal of the lesion requiring further treatment. Very rarely, depending on the body site and depth of the surgery, a nerve injury can occur, and this may result in numbness or loss of movement of the affected skin, which is usually temporary.

Blood thinning tablets:

If you are taking any blood thinning tablets, please tell us **before** you attend. Blood thinners include:

- **Warfarin:** You should have been given instructions about when to have your INR blood test checked. If you have not received any advice please contact us as soon as possible, using the phone numbers on the front page, **at least one week** prior to your surgery. Please inform your Warfarin clinic of the date of your procedure.
- **Aspirin and Clopidogrel:** Continue to take these as normal, unless advised to stop by your dermatologist. If you need to stop them, this is usually for **10 days** before the skin surgery.
- **New type of blood thinners e.g. Rivaroxaban, Apixaban, Dabigatran, Edoxaban:** You should have been advised in clinic whether to stop this medication before your operation. If you have not received instructions, please contact us as soon as possible for advice.

Please also inform the doctor if you have had a heart condition, stroke, blood clot, replacement heart valve, **pacemaker** or any implanted mechanical device for your heart.

Allergies: Please inform us if you have any allergies, particularly to local anaesthetic or rubber (latex) before you attend for your operation.

Holidays: You should **not** go on holiday in the **four** weeks after your skin surgery. Please phone us if you wish to discuss this.