See and treat clinic

Your GP has referred and booked you for an urgent appointment with one of our doctors. Our priority is to confirm or exclude a diagnosis of cancer. This leaflet explains what will happen on the day, how you can help receive treatment on the same day, the different operations and answers some frequently asked questions.

On the day

You will be seen by a doctor or specialist nurse for your skin condition. They will suggest the appropriate course of action and we will try to provide this as quickly as possible. For some patients no treatment is required leading to you being discharged, while others may require an operation. If it is possible to do so, suitable operations will be offered on the same day. There can be up to two hour wait for a same day operation.

Where it is not possible to provide an operation on the day, or if you want to come back again, another appointment will be booked.

After your operation you will receive a different leaflet, providing information on wound care, stitch removal and getting results.

In order for an on-the-day operation to take place, please follow the advice given in this leaflet. This can significantly improve the speed of receiving treatment.

What should I do before the appointment?

If you are taking Warfarin please arrange for an INR blood test five days before your appointment. INR results are given as a number (for example 2.1). If your INR result is 2.5 or less you need take no action. If the INR is above 2.5 please phone the result to the clinic straight away by ringing (01223 216091). It may be necessary to postpone your operation if the reading is too high.

If you smoke please consider stopping/reducing for 48 hours before your appointment to aid the healing process.

What should I do on the day? What should I bring with me?

Please bring a list of your current medications with you on the day of your appointment.

Please advise the doctors on the day if you are taking aspirin or any other anticoagulant (blood thinning tablets).

On the day, please take any regular medications (unless you have been told otherwise) and eat normally. We suggest you wear loose fitting, comfortable clothes. You may wish to have a friend or relative to accompany you, although they are not routinely permitted to be in the operating theatre, if you have an operation. You may also wish to bring a magazine or book to read as operations sometimes take longer than anticipated, resulting in delays.

All operations will take place in one of the theatres in Clinic 7, Level 3, Addenbrooke’s Hospital. Please report to the clinic reception desk when you arrive.
If you have a pacemaker or defibrillator (ICD) you must inform the doctor before the operation starts.

If you are pregnant please inform the doctor before the operation starts.

Unfortunately, staff in the clinic are unable to take care of any children while you are here. We suggest that either you make alternative arrangements for childcare or someone else comes to the unit with you.

**What kind of operation might be carried out?**

The type of operation will be discussed with you in clinic, and details of the operations are given below.

Before the operation we will ask you to sign a consent form.

All operations will be carried out under local anaesthetic so that you will be awake throughout and able to talk to us. The local anaesthetic will numb the area being operated on so you should feel no pain.

**Types of operation:**

- **Punch biopsy** (approximately 20 minutes).
  A three to four millimetre circle of skin is removed from the abnormal area for analysis. This will not treat the problem. The wound is sutured with one to two stitches or allowed to heal over.

- **Incisional biopsy** (approximately 20 minutes)
  A small ellipse (oval) of skin is removed from part of the abnormal area for analysis. This will not treat the problem. The wound is sutured with a few stitches (usually no more than five).

- **Curettage (scraping) or shave biopsy** (approximately 20 minutes)
  The lesion is scraped off or shaved off using a very sharp blade, leaving a graze or a small depression in the skin. The bleeding is stopped using an electric cautery machine. This procedure does not require stitches.

- **Excision of skin lesion** (approximately 40 minutes)
  A whole skin lesion is removed with a margin of normal skin around the edge. The bleeding is stopped using an electric cautery machine. There will be several stitches both above and below the skin surface.

Local anaesthesia is usually effective for about two hours. The wound often feels tender after this time. Paracetamol tablets may be taken for pain relief if necessary.

**What should I do or not do after the operation? Can I drive home afterwards?**

Please avoid anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS) such as Ibuprofen and Neurofen® for one to two days after surgery. These medicines can cause the wound to ooze or bleed. Whilst the wound is healing please avoid smoking because it can increase the amount of time it takes for the wound to close.

Although some people are able to drive themselves home after surgery, we suggest that the majority of patients have a companion to escort them home. Depending upon your insurance, you may not be covered to drive home after surgery. Patients should **not**
drive after surgery to the central face area. Ideally, patients who are having an excision should not cycle to or from their appointment.

Depending on the procedure performed you may have a number of stitches and a dressing. You will need to keep the wound and dressing dry for 48 hours. This may make it difficult to have a bath or a shower during this time.

Any stitches will usually require removal either with the nurse in your GP’s Practice or in the hospital clinic between five and 14 days after the procedure. Please let us know prior to your operation if you anticipate that this may be a problem.

You should avoid activities such as swimming, other strenuous exercise, bending, straining or lifting heavy objects for 14 days following the procedure.

Smoking has been shown to have an adverse effect on wound healing after surgery. We would therefore recommend that you do not smoke for one week after your operation.

**When will I get my results?**

If you do have an operation, you will either be given a clinic appointment to come and talk about the results, or one of the doctors may telephone you or write to you and your GP, to let you know the result. Please be aware that it may be up to six weeks before you receive the results.

**Does the operation carry any risks?**

**Bleeding**

It is normal for a small amount of blood to come through the dressing. Any heavier bleeding can usually be stopped by applying firm pressure to the dressing for fifteen minutes. If significant bleeding continues, then during normal working hours please contact the clinic on 01223 216 234, or if out of hours attend Accident and Emergency.

**Infection**

Rarely a wound can become infected, and this will show up as increased pain, swelling and redness of the wound after a few days. If you are concerned that the wound has become infected, please contact your GP or this department for advice.

**Scarring**

The stitch line is likely to be red initially but this redness usually fades over a period of weeks to months. You will be left with a permanent scar in the area, the length and width of which depends on the type of operation performed.

Should you have any questions about your procedure, please feel free to ask us when you attend for treatment or you may contact the surgery booking office on 01223 216091.

**Contact information**

**Dermatology enquiries**: 01223 216 234
We are now a smoke-free site: smoking will not be allowed anywhere on the hospital site.
For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169.

Other formats:

If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio, please ask the department where you are being treated, to contact the patient information team: patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk.
Please note: We do not currently hold many leaflets in other languages; written translation requests are funded and agreed by the department who has authored the leaflet.