

Excision of a Skin Lesion

What is excision of a skin lesion?

An excision of a skin lesion is a procedure in which your healthcare provider removes a sore or growth (a lesion) from your skin and then puts the skin back together.

This procedure may remove the lesion, but it may not cure whatever caused the lesion to form.

When is it used?

Reasons for doing this procedure are:

- The lesion on your skin is too big, bothersome, or unsightly.
- The lesion may be cancerous or precancerous.
- The lesion may rub against your clothing or is irritating or uncomfortable.

How do I prepare for this procedure?

Follow any instructions your healthcare provider may give you.

Ask any questions you have before the procedure. You should understand what your healthcare provider is going to do. You have the right to make decisions about your healthcare and to give permission for tests or procedures.

What happens during the procedure?

The healthcare provider cleanses the area and then numbs the skin around the lesion with a spray or shot of a local anesthetic. The anesthetic should keep you from feeling pain during the operation. Your provider cuts a football-shaped patch of skin around the lesion. He or she removes the patch of skin with the lesion and then puts your skin back together. Depending on the size and location of the wound, your wound may be closed with stitches, staples, skin glue, or surgical adhesive tape.

The tissue removed may be tested in the lab.

What happens after the procedure?

You may stay at the hospital or healthcare provider's office for observation for a short period of time. The area where the lesion was removed may be sore for a couple of days. When it heals, there will be a scar.

It is important to follow the instructions your provider gives you for caring for the wound after the surgery. This can prevent infection and help create the smallest, least visible scar. Sometimes, a lumpy scar called a keloid may grow where the lesion was

Ask your provider:

- How and when you will hear your test results
- How long it will take to recover
- What activities you should avoid and when you can return to your normal activities
- How to take care of yourself at home
- What symptoms or problems you should watch for and what to do if you have them
- If you have stitches or staples, when they need to be removed
- If you have surgical tape, when it should come off

Make sure you know when you should come back for a checkup.

What are the benefits of this procedure?

The sore area may heal and stop being uncomfortable. If it was a precancerous or cancerous growth, its removal may stop the development or spread of cancer. If the lesion was caused by a disease, such as tuberculosis (TB), lab tests of the lesion will help your healthcare provider diagnose and treat the problem.

If the removal was done to check for cancer, ask your provider when you will receive test results.

What are the risks of this procedure?

Your healthcare provider will explain the procedure and any risks. Some possible risks include:

- Anesthesia has some risks. Discuss these risks with your healthcare provider.
- You may have infection or bleeding.
- If the lesion was a cancerous or precancerous growth, it may grow back.

Every procedure or treatment has risks. Ask your healthcare provider how these risks apply to you. Be sure to discuss any other questions or concerns that you may have.

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