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Royal Cornwall Hospitals
NHS Trust

# Cryotherapy treatment of genital warts and molluscum contagiosum

## What is cryotherapy?

Cryotherapy is a carefully controlled cold burn which has been shown to be effective in treating genital warts and molluscum contagiosum. It may be used alone or alongside other treatments.

## Is it painful?

Cryotherapy is generally well tolerated, but it can be uncomfortable and sometimes painful during the treatment, although this usually only lasts for a few seconds. An anaesthetic cream can be applied before the treatment, if required.

## What can I expect afterwards?

Following treatment, the area may become red and swollen for a few days. Occasionally a small blister may form filled with either water or blood. This doesn't need to be opened, though it may discharge naturally. Often a scab forms over the treated area – leave this intact until it falls off on its own.

## How do I care for the treated area?

Keep the treated area clean but avoid soap or shower gel. You may use a soap substitute such as aqueous cream. Simply rinsing the area with water is fine.

Avoid antiseptic creams such as Savlon or Germolene, as these are too harsh for genital skin and may delay healing. Many people find the sparing application of white petroleum jelly (such as Vaseline) soothing.

Continued overleaf

## What if I have any pain or discomfort?

If you have a lot of pain and discomfort, taking paracetamol or ibuprofen usually helps. Follow the instructions on the packet carefully. If this doesn't help, or if the area becomes very red and inflamed, please phone the clinic for further advice.

## Will it heal without leaving any marks?

The treatment usually heals leaving no marks on the skin but sometimes a small scar may form. Changes to the pigmentation (colour) of the skin may happen, leaving the treatment site either darker or paler than the surrounding skin. This usually fades with time but may leave a small permanent mark.

## Any questions?

Please call 01872 255044 for sexual health clinic times and advice.

If you would like this leaflet in large print, braille, audio version or in another language, please contact the General Office on 01872 252690

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