

Liquid Nitrogen Therapy

I. Definition:

Liquid nitrogen is a cold, liquefied gas with a temperature of -321°F. Nitrogen makes up 70% of the air we breathe so it will not harm your eyes. Liquid nitrogen therapy is done by spraying this cold liquid onto the skin from a spray gun. Each skin growth that is treated needs to be sprayed three times. The skin must completely thaw between applications.

II. Uses:

- Liquid nitrogen is used to freeze and destroy skin growths, such as warts, keratoses and precancers.

III. Side Effects:

- Liquid nitrogen causes a stinging and burning pain while the growth is being frozen and this burning continues while it thaws.
- Some hours after liquid nitrogen treatment, your skin will become swollen and red; later on, it may blister. A scab (crust) will form. The crust will fall off by itself in 2-4 weeks. The skin growth will come off with the scab, leaving healthy new skin.
- If your growth required deep freezing, there may be considerable blistering, discomfort and swelling, especially if your hands or eyelids were treated. The blisters and swelling are part of the treatment and will gradually heal by themselves.
- Liquid nitrogen treatment often leaves a permanent, white scar which is usually flat.

IV. Care:

- After the blister falls off or breaks you will have a small sore. Apply Vaseline (petroleum jelly) one - two times a day to the sore and cover it with a Band-Aid. You can wash your skin as usual and use make-up or other cosmetics.
- Sometimes liquid nitrogen treatment fails. If the growth is not cured by liquid nitrogen, please make a return appointment, as the growth may be an early skin cancer and may require surgery.



Courtesy of **KENDALL ANNE MORRISON, M.D.**
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