

## **LIQUID NITROGEN TREATMENT** **(CRYOTHERAPY)**

Liquid nitrogen is a cold gas with a temperature of 196 degrees below zero Celsius (-321 degrees Fahrenheit). It is used to treat a variety of skin conditions such as warts. In many cases, a single treatment is effective, but often repeated treatments are necessary.

Once applied or sprayed on the skin, stinging occurs and lasts a few minutes until the skin completely thaws. A throbbing discomfort may persist for a few days if certain locations such as the hands or feet are treated. If a growth (such as a wart) requires deeper freeze, redness, swelling, and blistering of the skin will occur. This is an expected reaction. As the skin blisters, the growth is lifted off the skin and falls off with the blister in a few days. A scab or crust will eventually form, and last until the skin heals. Do not scratch or rub the area, and do not break the blister, as this will delay healing. It may also cause scarring or cause infection. However, if the blister is annoyingly large or painful, you may puncture it with a sterile needle (either dipped in alcohol or heated with a match), and let the fluid drain into a tissue. Afterwards, cover the puncture the blister with Vaseline and then a Band-Aid. Apply fresh Vaseline and replace the bandage daily for three to five days if you puncture the blister.

If a blister or scab is unsightly, you may cover it loosely with a clean Band-Aid. In general, no special care is needed after liquid nitrogen treatment. Simply allow the skin to pass through the expected series of reactions until healing occurs. The healing process usually takes one to six weeks and most commonly results in normal-looking skin without scars or discoloration.

If your doctor has requested a follow-up appointment, please be sure to check back with him. It is often necessary for the physician to re-evaluate the patient to be sure that treatment has been adequate and that healing has occurred without complication.