

Electrosurgery for Genital Warts and Skin Lesions

What is Electrosurgery?

Electrosurgery is a way to treat skin problems using heat made by electricity. It can help remove things like:

- Genital warts
- Skin tags
- Small lumps or bumps

The heat helps to cut, dry out, or destroy the unwanted skin growth.

Types of Electrosurgery We Use

Thermocautery is performed using a low temperature loop cautery pen that has a heated wire that causes a superficial burn to remove skin lesions and stop bleeding.

This is suitable for small, thin lesions as the heat effect is very superficial.



Electrofulguration, **electrodessication**, and **electrosection** are performed using a machine called a Hyfrecator, a device that uses electrodes that apply electric current to the skin in different ways.

- Electrofulguration – a spark touches the wart or lesion to form a thick scab over a shallow burn.
- Electrodessication – the tip touches the lesion to dry out and destroy it (deeper burn)
- Electrosection – cuts through the lesion/skin while sealing blood vessels to stop bleeding.



Questions?

It's natural to have questions about your procedure - we're here to help you feel safe and informed. To get in contact, email sexualhealth@tuora.org.nz with availability for a phone call with a clinician, or call us on 0800 188 881 to book in through reception.

FAQ's

What Happens During the Procedure?

- Local anaesthetic is used to numb the area – this means you won't feel pain. You will be awake for the procedure.
- The procedure takes a few minutes for each 1cm size lesion. Larger/multiple lesions may take a few sessions as it may not be safe to use large amounts of local anaesthetic.
- The doctor or nurse uses a small device to treat the lesion.
- You might feel a pushing or warm sensation, but it shouldn't hurt.
- No dressings are used in the genital area, but you may be given advice on keeping the area clean and dry.

Why is it used?

Electrosurgery uses electricity or heat to treat skin lesions. It works by making the area very hot – sometimes over 1000 degrees Celsius. That would be extremely painful if the skin wasn't numbed first. Because of this, it wouldn't be safe or kind to do electrosurgery without using a local anaesthetic to numb the skin.

What is a local anaesthetic?

A local anaesthetic is a medicine that numbs a small part of your body. It stops you from feeling pain in the area where the doctor or nurse is working. You stay awake the whole time.

What happens during the injection?

The doctor or nurse will clean the skin and then use a small needle to inject the anaesthetic. You might feel a quick sting or pinch. The area will go numb in a few minutes. A numbing cream could be used on the skin 40-60 minutes before your procedure to help numb the skin before the injection. This cream may help reduce the sting of the local anaesthetic injection, but it doesn't always work the same for everyone. It might make things feel a bit easier, but the effect can vary from person to person. ***It's okay to ask about it if you're worried about the injection.***

How long does it last?

The numbness usually lasts for 1 to 3 hours. You may feel tingling as the feeling comes back.

Are there any side effects?

Side effects are rare, but you might notice:

- A small bruise or swelling where the needle went in,
- Tingling or numbness for a few hours,
- Very rarely, an allergic reaction.

Tell your doctor or nurse if you feel unwell or have any concerns.

What should I know about after the procedure?

Be careful not to bump or hurt the numb area until the feeling comes back. Follow any care instructions given to you by the clinic. Aftercare includes;

- Gently clean the area with warm water and pat dry.
- Avoid tight clothing or anything that rubs the area.
- Don't use creams or ointments unless we tell you to.
- If bleeding happens, press gently with a clean tissue or cloth for 20 minutes.

Will I Have a Scar?

Some people get a small scar. It's usually flat and the same size as the lesion. Some people may get bigger scars (called keloids), especially if their skin heals differently.

Are There Any Risks?

Electrosurgery is safe, but there are some small risks:

- Burns – if the equipment touches the skin in the wrong way.
- Infection – rare, but possible. If the lesion is in an area where it is more likely to get infected, your clinician will prescribe you an antibiotic ointment to use to prevent infection.
- Smoke – the procedure can make smoke that may carry viruses like HPV. We use suction machines to safely remove smoke from the air.
- Scarring or colour changes – the skin may heal lighter or darker than before.

What information does the clinician need to know?

- Tell us if you have a pacemaker or other heart device.
- Let us know about any medicines, allergies, or health conditions.
- You may need to sign a consent form before the procedure.