

Women's Cancer Information Project

Coordinated by the European Institute of Women's Health

Treatment



Surgery This is the most common treatment for skin cancer.

1. *Your doctor may remove the cancer using one of the following:* **Cryosurgery** – this freezes the tumour and kills it. This type of surgery is used for very small cancers and premalignant and abnormal ones. Simple **excision** cuts the cancer from your skin along with some of the healthy tissue around it. **Electrosurgery/cauterisation** burns the tumour and removes it with a sharp instrument. This type of surgery is common for small tumours. Surgery may leave a scar on your skin. Depending on the size and location of the cancer, a skin graft may be performed to cover the area scarred.
2. **Chemotherapy:** drugs are used to kill the cancer cells.

Chemotherapy is often given as a cream or lotion placed on the skin. It may also be taken by pill or it may be put into the body by a needle in a vein or muscle. This form of treatment is occasionally used when melanoma has spread to other parts of the body.

- **Radiation therapy / Radiotherapy** Radiotherapy uses high energy rays to destroy cancer cells.

Although radiotherapy uses stronger rays than the X- rays used for taking pictures, it feels no different and is painless. There is as little harm as possible to normal cells. Radiotherapy is commonly used in addition to surgery, or for awkward surgical sites or where surgery may be disfiguring. Treatment for skin cancer depends on the type and stage of the disease, your age, and your overall health and well-being.

- **Hormonal Treatment**

It may be the case that certain levels of certain hormones help the cancer to grow. Hormonal therapy involves changing the levels of the hormones that may be helping the cancer to grow.

This therapy affects the entire body and is used along with other methods. At the time of biopsy (breast) cancer cells are checked to see if growth is influenced by the hormones oestrogen and progesterone, therefore testing whether this form of treatment should be used.

REMEMBER! Early detection is the best solution.