

LOCAL FLAP RECONSTRUCTION

FOLLOWING REMOVAL OF A SKIN CANCER

Background

The diagnosis of any cancer is sometimes difficult to come to terms with. Fortunately the majority of skin cancers can be treated very effectively with surgery and few cause any further problems. Mr Banwell is an internationally-recognised expert in skin cancer care so rest assured that you are in the best possible hands: he and his team will help you through this journey and try to make it as smooth as possible.

The treatment

Sometimes it is not possible to remove a skin cancer and then sew up the skin directly. In such cases spare skin nearby (local flap) needs to be moved into the wound and then stitched up. This technique avoids the need for a skin graft. The procedure is usually performed under local anaesthetic although in some cases a general anaesthetic may be required – Mr. Banwell will discuss.

Duration of surgery?

The procedure takes 1-2 hours depending on the complexity of your case

Complications of Surgery?

Unfortunately complications can occur following any surgery and patients need to be fully aware of this. Mr Banwell does his utmost to minimise the complication rate and likes to practise in a safe manner. The commonest complications are scarring, adverse scarring, bleeding, haematoma formation and the need to return to theatre, infection, numbness, wound healing issues and contour irregularities. Patients must be made aware that cosmesis will be affected

After surgery?

During surgery sutures will be used and these will need to be removed after a week. Your wound will usually be dressed with brown micropore tape. This can get wet (showering or washing) but you should not soak in the bath. You will be able to shower the day after surgery, after which you can pat the tape dry with a towel then use a hairdryer. It is important to ensure the tape is fully dried. This will stay in place until after your stitches are removed. Mr Banwell may also give you antibiotics depending on your particular case.

Recovery?

Mr Banwell usually likes you to take things easy for a week at least and to avoid lifting or carrying anything for two weeks. Even simple manoeuvres such as cleaning your teeth or tying shoelaces can lead to bleeding. To help minimize swelling after the operation, Mr Banwell likes you to sleep on a couple of pillows. Golf, gardening and other leisure activities should be avoided for 2 weeks.

Success and satisfaction?

This plastic surgery technique provides a very good reconstruction and the colour match of the skin is usually excellent.

Important Notice

Mr Banwell strongly advises you stop smoking prior to surgery as this can affect the outcome of surgery and increase complication rates. Nutritional supplements, anticoagulant medication and blood thinners (eg. aspirin and brufen) all increase the risk of bleeding and should be stopped prior to surgery unless otherwise instructed.

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NOTES & QUESTIONS

AT A GLANCE

SURGERY TIME

1 hour

HOSPITAL STAY

Day case

ANAESTHETIC ASSESSMENT

No

PRE ADMISSION TESTS

No

SLEEPING POSITION

Sleeping on back recommended for 2 weeks.
(keep head elevated)

REASONABLY MOBILE

1 day

WASHING

Shower after 1 day

DRIVING

3 weeks

EXERCISE INCLUDING GYM

2-3 weeks

FULL RECOVERY

2 weeks

TIME OFF WORK

Up to a week