



## **Dermatofibrosarcoma Protuberans (DFSP)**

### **Your treatment explained**

#### **What is Dermatofibrosarcoma Protuberans (DFSP)**

DFSP is a rare type of skin cancer which usually occurs on the torso of the body (chest and shoulders) but it can occur on the limbs, head and neck. It develops in the dermis which is the second layer of skin and its cause is unknown. DFSP can be cured with a wide surgical excision. It can however grow back. DFSP rarely spreads (metastasises) to other areas of the body.

#### **How common is DFSP?**

DFSP is not very common and most GPs will not have seen a case. It most commonly occurs in adults in their 30's; men and women are equally affected. For every one million people, about 5 to 8 will develop DFSP.

#### **What are the signs and symptoms?**

The symptoms of DFSP can be very subtle; patients may notice an area of brown or reddish discolouration to the skin that may feel hard or rubbery to the touch. These areas are not usually painful or uncomfortable.

#### **How is it diagnosed?**

DFSP is diagnosed by taking a tissue sample of the area. This is called a tissue biopsy. The biopsy is then sent to the laboratory to be tested where a diagnosis will be made.

#### **How is it treated?**

Surgical excision is the most common form of treatment. Often the area removed will be reconstructed with either a skin graft or flap of tissue. However, even after surgery DFSPs can sometimes grow back.

### **Agreeing to treatment**

#### **Consent**

We will ask you to sign a consent form agreeing to accept the treatment that you are being offered. The basis of the agreement is that you have had The Christie's written description of the proposed treatment and that you have been given an opportunity to discuss any concerns. You are entitled to request a second opinion from another doctor who specialises in treating this cancer. You can ask your own consultant or your GP to refer you. Your consent may be withdrawn at any time before or during this treatment. Should you decide to withdraw your consent then a member of your treating team will discuss the possible consequences with you.

#### **What are the risks of this treatment?**

As with any type of surgery there are potential complications or risks. These may include bleeding, infection or scarring. With DFSP there is a particular risk that the area removed may grow back.

**Are there any alternatives to this treatment?**

At present there are no alternatives to this treatment.

**What are the benefits of this treatment?**

DFSPs grow slowly but if left untreated they will continue to grow deeper into the skin. Surgical treatment is important to prevent this from happening.

**What happens after surgery?**

You will be reviewed at our plastic surgery dressing clinic where we will check your wound and, if appropriate, we will remove any stitches and replace dressings. You will be reviewed in the consultants' clinic approximately six weeks after surgery. Your regular follow-up with your consultant will then be six-monthly for two years then yearly for a further three years.

**The role of your clinical nurse specialist**

The clinical nurse specialist (CNS) aims to provide support and information to people with a cancer diagnosis. The CNS will also provide support to their families and carers if it is needed. The aim is to support you from the point of diagnosis, throughout your investigations, treatment planning and follow-up.

We will give you a contact telephone number for your CNS so that you can contact her should you have any questions or concerns throughout your care at The Christie.

**Contacts****Plastic Surgery / Sarcoma Nurse Specialist**

Lisa Cooper:           **0161 918 7586**

**Sarcoma Nurse Specialist**

Ann Buchan:           **0161 446 3094**

If you need information in a different format, such as easy read, large print, BSL, braille, email, SMS text or other communication support, please tell your ward or clinic nurse.

We try to ensure that all our information given to patients is accurate, balanced and based on the most up-to-date scientific evidence. If you would like to have details about the sources used please contact **patient.information@christie.nhs.uk**

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For more information about The Christie and our services, please visit **www.christie.nhs.uk** or visit the cancer information centres at Withington, Oldham or Salford.

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