

Patient Information

## **Bowen's Disease**

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask a member of the nursing or medical staff, or call the Dermatology/Skin Cancer Specialist Nurse:

**Mihaela Savu**

Tel: 01935 384906

Mobile: 07990 776684

or email: [mihaela.savu@ydh.nhs.uk](mailto:mihaela.savu@ydh.nhs.uk)

**Plastics Secretary**

Tel: 01935 384887

**Dermatology Secretary**

Tel: 01935 384871

***Dermatology  
& Plastic Surgery***

[www.yeovilhospital.nhs.uk](http://www.yeovilhospital.nhs.uk)

We hope this leaflet will help you understand a little more about this condition. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to ask the nursing or medical staff. They will be happy to help you.

### **What is Bowen's Disease?**

You have been diagnosed as having Bowen's Disease. It is named after an American dermatologist who first described this problem.

It is a skin disease which shows up as dry, red patches on the skin. These patches develop mainly because of sun damage and they are sometimes called pre-cancerous. This is because if the condition is untreated it may become thicker and go deeper into the skin. It would then be considered to be invasive skin cancer.

This is rare but happens occasionally.

### **What kind of treatment can I expect?**

The type of treatment depends on the place on the body that is affected, the size of the affected area, and how you feel about the options that the doctor will discuss with you.

#### **Common treatments are:**

- Freezing the area with a cold spray of liquid nitrogen (cryosurgery)
- Using a treatment cream
- Surgery under a local anaesthetic

These treatments can often cause some soreness and it can take several weeks for the skin to recover.

### **What are the risks and complications?**

If a specific treatment has been offered, then please read the information leaflet relevant to that treatment. The doctor will discuss any risks or complications associated with this treatment with you. If you have any questions please feel free to ask.

### **Is the condition dangerous?**

Bowen's disease itself is not dangerous, but it can cause problems if it is left to turn into skin cancer.

### **What else should I look for?**

- People who have Bowen's Disease may have sun damaged skin elsewhere. This is usually seen on the face, backs of the hands and on the scalp of balding men. Women sometimes suffer on the front of their shins
- Changes brought on by excessive exposure to the sun include wrinkles, brown marks or simple small areas of scaling skin called Actinic Keratoses
- If you are concerned about additional skin lesions then you will need to ask your GP for advice
- Some brown marks and Actinic Keratoses may need treatment but avoidance of sunshine will prevent them from developing.

### **How can I prevent getting more sun damage?**

Protecting yourself from strong sunshine will help prevent your skin from ageing. This will not necessarily stop you getting Bowen's Disease again, but it will help to reduce the associated problems mentioned.

#### **Protection from sunshine means:**

- **Stay in the shade 11am–3pm.**  
The sun is most dangerous in the middle of the day, find shade under umbrellas, trees, canopies or indoors
- **Make sure you never burn.** Sunburn can double your risk of skin cancer
- **Always cover up.** Sunscreen is not enough, wear a t-shirt, a wide brimmed hat and wrap around sunglasses
- **Remember to take extra care with children.** Young skin is delicate, keep babies out of the sun around midday
- **Use factor 15+ sunscreen.** Apply sunscreen generously 15–30 minutes before you go outside and reapply often

Also report mole changes or unusual skin growths promptly to your doctor.