Curettage and Desiccation (C&D) is used primarily for the surgical removal of:

- Benign skin lesions including warts, angiomas, and nevi
- Precancerous lesions including Actinic Keratoses, dysplastic nevi, or atypical moles
- Small skin cancers such as basal cell cancers and cutaneous squamous cell carcinomas

This treatment is the scraping and burning of the skin to remove the cancer cells. It is most suitable in non-crucial areas such as the trunk and extremities where small scars would not be as noticeable. The borders of the lesions must also be well defined. In certain situations where lesions have spread into deeper layers of skin or when there are recurrent lesions, C&D is less effective. When surgical procedures would not be tolerated well, such as an elderly patient with multiple skin cancers, this technique is often preferred.

**Curettage and Electrodesiccation Procedure Explained**

First, using a small injection of local anesthetic, the lesion or lesions and surrounding tissue and skin is numbed. The surgeon uses a curette (spoon-shaped, sharp instrument) to remove the abnormal cells by scraping down to a layer of uninvolved tissue.

Then, desiccation (electrosurgery) is performed with a small, metal instrument used to widen the margin and cauterize the wound to minimize bleeding. The wound is left to heal without being sutured which usually heals over several weeks.

**Skin Cancer Treatment Advantages & Disadvantages**

With a high cure rate, this treatment method is a highly efficient and cost effective treatment available for the treatment of skin cancer. Follow up care is required after treatment because there is a chance of recurrence if all the abnormal cells are not destroyed. A biopsy or more advanced techniques of removal may become necessary if there is a recurrence.
Alternative Treatment Options to C&D

During your evaluation appointment with the physician, some alternative treatment options for removing skin lesions may include:

- Liquid nitrogen
- Cryotherapy: freezing of the lesion
- Surgical removal
- Mohs micrographic surgery
- Laser surgery
- Radiation or chemotherapy