



WOUND CARE INSTRUCTIONS FOR SKIN SURGERY

SUTURED WOUND / OPEN WOUND (NO SUTURES)

BANDAGE:

Leave the bandage in place for 24 hours. You may shower or bathe after 24 hours. Shower and then remove and replace the bandage (see below). We will give you a supply of bandaging materials that will be adequate for most wound care.

DISCOMFORT:

Expect some pain. If the suturing is tight the pain will be more severe. Take acetaminophen (ex: Tylenol) every six hours as directed. If this does not provide sufficient relief, take ibuprofen (Advil), up to 600mg every EIGHT hours. You may take both together and alternate them. We do not routinely prescribe narcotic pain medications. If the pain is severe and not relieved by the above measures, please call the office.

BLEEDING:

Some blood seeping into the bandage is NORMAL. If the bleeding soaks through the dressing, remove the dressing, and apply firm, steady pressure with a clean bare finger / thumb. Gauze will stick. If the bleeding stops, re-dress the wound. If not, call our office. Serious bleeding is rare. In this rare instance, apply pressure and call us at once so that we can assist you.

ACTIVITY:

No strenuous activity for the first 48 hours after surgery. Keep your head elevated. The more you try to do in the first few days, the more discomfort you will have.

APPEARANCE:

Swelling and bruising are normal. If the surgery is on the forehead or near the eye, it is common for the eye to swell shut. Pinkness / light redness is normal, but the wound should not be red, hot, and tender.

WOUND CARE FOR A SUTURED WOUND:

- Change the dressing daily and/or when it becomes wet.
- Wash hands with soap and water and clean the wound with a fresh bar of soap and warm water. We recommend a bland, brand-name soap without perfumes.
- Use 3% Hydrogen Peroxide and a cotton swab to remove the crusting.
- Apply a thin layer of sterile petroleum over the wound.
- Cover the wound with Telfa, Curad or similar “non-stick” dressing or bandage.
- Tape in place with Hypafix® or paper tape.
- Keep all sutured wounds covered daily for a full 7 days.



- Open wounds will need to be covered for much longer.
- If you have sutures that require removal, you will receive specific instructions regarding when and where to have them removed.
- If you have dissolving sutures they will fall apart and usually be gone in 10-14 days.
- Mild tenderness, pinpoint bleeding and a thin mucus-like discharge are normal. There is often some minor discharge on the bandage.

WOUND CARE FOR OPEN WOUND HEALING (NO SUTURES):

If your wound was left open to heal on its own, the wound will take longer to heal. At first there will be some bleeding. About one week after surgery, a pink/red halo will form around the outside of the wound. The center of the wound will appear yellowish-pink and produce some mucus-like drainage. The wound will gradually fill in with reddish tissue, and the pink halo will slowly migrate toward the center of the wound until the wound is covered with new shiny pink skin. There will be no more drainage on the bandage when the wound is completely healed.

COMMON ISSUES THAT MAY BE CONCERNING:

Swelling occurs frequently and can be frightening. It is usually worst on the second and third day after surgery and is often worse in the morning.

Stitched wounds are often firm for a few months as the scar forms. The deep sutures dissolve away, and the scar gradually softens.

Sometimes during healing one of the deep sutures will fester and “spit” through the surface. This looks like a pimple and will drain some pus or pink fluid.

WHEN TO CONTACT YOUR PHYSICIAN:

- Your wound rapidly swells up or becomes increasingly inflamed, warm, or drains puss.
- You experience active bleeding and cannot control the bleeding with pressure
- You have severe pain that is not controlled by a combination of acetaminophen and ibuprofen.

Please call our office at 802-864-0192 or 1-800-564-3237, with any questions or concerns.