

Wound Care Instructions

Please observe the following guidelines to help your surgical wounds and biopsies heal quickly, successfully and with less scarring.

After Surgical Wound Care - If at all possible, do not remove the bandage for the first 24-48 hours after the procedure. Your bandage will keep your wound clean, moist, and will help prevent bleeding. After 24-48 hours, your post-wound care will depend on if you have a brown piece of tape over the wound or if you have Vaseline and a regular Band-Aid. Most surgical wounds will have the brown piece of tape.

1) If there is no brown tape and just Vaseline over the wound follow the below

instructions: after 48 hours, gently take off the bandage and clean the area with a mild cleanser and water. Do not spray water directly into the wound. Rather, gently run water over the wound to rinse off the cleanser. Pat the area dry. Apply a film of ointment (Vaseline or Aquaphor Healing Ointment) and re-bandage the area. Repeat every 24 hours until you return for removal of the sutures.

2) If you have the brown piece of tape:

First, directly over your stitches we placed a piece of brown tape. This brown tape stays in place until you return to the clinic to have the stitches removed. We will remove the brown tape for you. You may see dry blood underneath the tape but this is expected and you should refrain from removing the tape. This brown tape is resilient to water and it is okay if it gets wet in the showers (after 48 hours), but do not immerse into water (i.e., bath tub, hot tub, swimming pool) or scrub the tape off until after sutures are removed. If the brown tape comes off before your stitch removal appointment, you will need to take care of your wound. In that case you will want to apply Vaseline and Band-Aid to the surgical site, changing it daily until you return to have your stitches removed.

Second, on top of the brown tape, we have placed a pressure bandage to help prevent bleeding, the pressure bandage consists of white gauze and white tape. If at all possible, keep the pressure bandage dry and in place for 24-48 hours after surgery. After 24-48 hours gently take off all the white bandaging while leaving on the brown tape. There is no wound care needed unless the brown tape comes off before your stitch removal appointment.

Regardless of if you have the brown tape or the Vaseline and Band-Aid method of bandaging, please do **NOT** immerse the wound under water (bath, hot tub, swimming pool, etc.) until one week after sutures are removed. **Also, please do not get the area wet with either water or sweat for 48 hours after the procedure to reduce chances of infection.**

Moisture - Wounds (from procedures like excisions, biopsies, ...) heal better when they are moist. **If a scab ever develops over a wound that can mean that the wound is too dry and poor healing can result.** Wounds can be kept moist by either keeping the brown piece of tape on the area (for excisions) OR liberally applying an ointment (Vaseline or Aquaphor Healing Ointment) to the wound daily and cover with a bandage until the wound has healed and no open sore remains.

Activity - Please keep movement of the procedural site to a minimum for the first six weeks after surgery. Avoid anything that bothers the wound or puts pull or pressure on the wound for six weeks after the procedure and then slowly start to increase activity to the affected area.

Bleeding - Occasionally wounds bleed. Almost all the time, this bleeding can be stopped by applying pressure to the area for 10 minutes while elevating the area above the level of your heart. **No peeking!!!** After you have been applying pressure for 10 continuous minutes slowly let up the pressure and see if the wound is still bleeding. If it is, please call the office (719-531-5400) or go to an Emergency Room if we can't be reached quickly.

Infection - Even though exhaustive efforts are taken to eliminate infections, occasionally wounds do become infected. A little redness (less than 1cm) around the wound is normal. However, if the skin around the wound becomes increasingly more red, swollen, hot, painful, or if you develop fevers/chills/night sweats/just feel bad you may have an infection. If this occurs, please call the office or go to the Emergency Room if we can't be reached quickly.

Pain - Mild discomfort and swelling can be encountered during the healing process. This usually occurs 6-24 hours after surgery. Take Tylenol if needed (unless you're not allowed to). If continued discomfort or increased swelling occurs, please call the office. You may also ice the area for 5-10 minutes an hour if needed for pain. Use a frozen bag of vegetables (preferably peas) or a bag of ice, and put on top of a towel or washcloth to the affected area. NEVER put ice directly on the skin, and limit application to 5 minutes per hour to avoid frostbite (freezing the skin). This will help reduce discomfort/pain, swelling, and bruising.

If the affected area is an extremity (arm or leg), elevate the affected limb ABOVE chest level for 5 minutes an hour to reduce swelling and discomfort. This is best done in a reclined position with pillows. Move the toes or fingers to help circulation and reduce swelling. It is ok to alternate Tylenol and Ibuprofen if you have no liver or kidney problems and ok with your primary doctor/provider. It is important to take this medicine with food and for the shortest duration possible. Take as directed on the bottle and as needed if ice is not sufficient. If your discomfort is still persistent or becomes worse, please contact our office at 719-531-5400 or go to an Emergency Room if we can't quickly be contacted.

Suture Removal and Pathology - You will be given an appointment for suture removal usually from 5-21 days after the procedure. This is usually a painless process but some mild discomfort can be experienced. If you do not get the lab results of what was removed at suture removal, please ask!

Continued Post Surgery Precautions - You likely have had surgery for either an atypical mole or a skin cancer. That being the case, you are much more likely to develop another one in the future. Therefore it is critically important for you to do monthly skin exams on yourself to find any lesion that is growing, changing, or simply not healing. If you notice a lesion that is growing, changing, or not healing, you must seek treatment by a dermatologist within a couple of weeks. Also, you should have full body skin exams by a Dermatologist yearly for the rest of your life!

Any further questions, please call 719-531-5400 Please watch our videos on www.coderm.com They were made for YOU!!!