



Dermatology and Cutaneous Surgery

POST-OPERATIVE WOUND CARE

The importance of post-operative care to your surgical site cannot be over stressed. The care you take of your surgical wound is extremely important to the success of the procedure and to your healing.

There are several things that could happen following surgery:

1. **Bleeding** can occur following surgery. To reduce the possibility of bleeding, the following instructions are given:
 - ◆ Limit activities for at least 24 hours
 - ◆ Keep the post-operative site elevated
 - ◆ If surgery was on the face, head or neck – avoid stooping or bending, avoid straining to have a bowel movement, and sleep with your head and shoulders elevated on extra pillows
 - ◆ Should minor bleeding occur, apply firm constant pressure on the bandage for 20 minutes.
2. **Swelling** occurs because surgery has caused a wound and your body reacts to that injury. To reduce the amount of swelling that may occur:
 - ◆ Apply an ice bag for 20 minutes each hour during the waking hours. If you do not have an ice bag, a zip-lock bag filled with cracked ice and wrapped with a thin towel will do nicely.
 - ◆ Keep your bandage dry
3. **Pain**, post-operatively, is generally slight. In nearly all cases, Extra-Strength Tylenol will relieve any pain you may experience.
4. **Infection** seldom occurs when the wound care instructions have been carefully followed. Signs of infection are: increased pain, swelling, redness or yellowish drainage several days after surgery. Notify our office immediately should signs of infection occur.

Wound Care after 48 hours

1. Wash your hands with soap and water. Clean the biopsy site with soap and water twice daily.
2. Dry wound thoroughly by blotting with a clean soft cloth.
3. If there are steri-strips over the wound, simply leave intact and cover with a fresh bandage daily. If the steri-strips begin to pull back, trim the ends but do not pull off. Some may completely fall off before your sutures are removed which is not a concern.
4. If there are no steri-strips, apply a thin layer of Vaseline/Bacitracin with a Q-tip. Avoid Neosporin / Neomycin.
5. Cover with a clean bandage. Repeat until the wound is healed.
6. If you have self-dissolving top sutures, keep them moist with Vaseline/Bacitracin and covered with a clean bandage until sutures completely dissolve.

There will be a scar and redness in the scar after surgery. This will decrease as healing progresses but redness should be expected as long as six months. Everyone heals differently and the final scar appearance depends on the individual's ability to heal. Some scars heal and can hardly be seen while others become thick and/or tender. Because of the unpredictability in wound healing, the final appearance cannot be pre-operatively ascertained, and no guarantees can be implied or stated as to the final appearance of the scar.

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