

Ada West DERMATOLOGY

Diseases of the Skin, Hair, Nails, and Skin Cancer Treatment

Mohs Surgery
Phone: (208) 955-0962

Alisa Funke, MD

WOUND CARE INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUTURED WOUNDS

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS:

- ◆ Take it easy! Do not do anything that raises your blood pressure or heart rate for at least 48 hours. No exercising, lifting, bending, stretching, or straining.
- ◆ Do not exercise heavily or lift heavy objects until after sutures are removed.
- ◆ Do not drink alcohol for 48 hours.
- ◆ Do not take aspirin, ibuprofen, or naproxen for 48 hours (unless aspirin has been prescribed by your physician for heart problems, stroke, blood clots)
- ◆ Do not be surprised if you see a small amount of blood-tinged drainage. If your dressing becomes saturated with bright, red blood, remove the dressing. Then use a clean gauze to apply gentle, but firm direct pressure to the wound for 10 minutes (no peeking). If the bleeding has not stopped apply pressure for another 10 minutes. **If the bleeding has not stopped after 20 minutes, or there is a large, swollen, purple area around the surgery site, call our office at (208) 955-0962 or the Emergency Contact Information below.** If the bleeding stops, then clean and redress the surgical site.
- ◆ Bruising and swelling around the surgical site is normal. If your surgery was near the eye, forehead, nose, or cheeks you may experience a black eye. Your eye may even swell shut. Do not be frightened if this happens. The swelling will go down once you are up and around.
- ◆ If your surgical site is on the head, sleep with your head elevated about 30 degrees (a couple of pillows) for the first couple nights to decrease swelling.
- ◆ Take Extra Strength Tylenol® (acetaminophen 500 mg), every 4 to 6 hours for pain. You should take 2 tablets each time, but do NOT take more than 8 pills in a 24-hour period. This is typically enough to manage post-operative discomfort, but depending on location or size Dr. Funke may prescribe a mild narcotic. If this narcotic also contains acetaminophen do NOT take additional acetaminophen until you complete taking the narcotic.
- ◆ For the first 48 hours you may apply an ice bag to the surgical site every few hours while you are awake. Apply the ice bag about 20 minutes at a time **over the top of your dressing**. A bag of frozen vegetables (peas or corn) works very well also. Wrap a clean washcloth around the bag and hit the bag on the counter so that the contents become “pebbly”. Do not apply ice directly to the skin.
- ◆ Keep the dressing clean and dry for 48 hours. After 48 hours you may remove the dressing, get the wound wet, clean the wound, and redress the wound (as instructed below).
- ◆ If prescribed an antibiotic please take as directed and complete the full course.

If you
bleed

Pain
Control

Ice the
area

**CLEANING AND PUTTING A NEW DRESSING ON YOUR SURGICAL SITE:
(2 days after surgery)**

- ◆ Keeping your wound clean and moist will prevent a thick scab from forming. This is important because a thick scab will impair wound healing and may lead to a more noticeable scar.
- ◆ ALWAYS WASH YOUR HANDS PRIOR TO CHANGING YOUR DRESSING
- ◆ After 48 hours you may get the wound wet in the shower. Do NOT soak your wound and do NOT allow direct water pressure to hit the wound. It is ok for soap lather and water to run over the wound, but do NOT lather the wound directly. Gently pat the wound dry with a clean towel.
- ◆ After the first 48 hours carefully remove your dressing and begin twice-a-day (morning and evening) cleaning and dressing of the wound.

Clean and
rebandage
the wound

- Use plain water and mild soap such as Dove® liquid, baby shampoo, or Cetaphil® cleanser to gently wash the area. Put a few drops of soap into a clean cup of warm water.
 - You should use a cotton tip applicator (Q-tip®) or clean gauze to clean the wound. Gently remove any dried blood or excess crust by rolling the cotton tip applicator or gauze over the wound and then rinsing. **Do not use cotton balls.**
- ◆ After cleaning, apply a thin coat of Vaseline® or Aquaphor®. Then apply a new thin bandage (Band-Aid® or non-stick gauze and paper tape). The bandage only has to be large enough to cover the stitches. Dr. Funke will tell you if an antibiotic ointment should be used instead of Vaseline.
 - ◆ Most wounds may be left uncovered after sutures are removed. However, wounds that are on an area of the body that becomes easily irritated should be covered with a bandage for an additional 1-2 weeks.
 - ◆ If a scab forms allow it to fall off on its own. Keep dressing the wound and keep it moist with Vaseline® or Aquaphor®. Do NOT pick the scab off.
 - ◆ Sutures are typically removed in 7-14 days. After suture removal, steri-strips may be placed over the wound to provide additional support. You will no longer need to continue dressing the wound and it is ok to get the steri-strips wet. They will begin to peel away and will eventually fall off on their own. You may trim the edges, but do NOT pull the steri-strip away from the wound.

FOLLOW-UP CARE:

1. Return in _____ days for dressing change, suture removal, or staple removal.
2. Return in _____ months for wound/scar check.
3. Return to your general dermatologist for all other skin problems, including a skin exam in 6 months and every 6 months after that for 2 years.

CALL THE DOCTOR IF YOU NOTICE:

- ◆ Bright red bleeding from your wound that does not stop after applying gentle, direct pressure for 20 minutes.
- ◆ A large, swollen, tender, purple area around either surgery site (hematoma).
- ◆ Redness or swelling that lasts more than 4 days.
- ◆ Red streaks around the wound.
- ◆ Increased bloody drainage, green or yellow drainage, or a foul smelling drainage from your wound.
- ◆ A fever greater than 101° F that continues after 3 days.

◆ **If you have any questions or concerns, please call us at (208) 955-0962.**

◆ For **after-hours** emergency, call Dr. Funke's cell phone (208) 890-5047.

◆ If you are unable to reach Dr. Funke please go to your local hospital emergency department.