

Blue Ocean Dermatology

Post Operation Wound Care Instructions

Bleeding: Some bleeding can occur following surgery. To reduce the possibility of bleeding, restrict activities today and spend most of the day resting. Avoid stooping, bending, heavy lifting, and exercising until sutures are removed. Any bleeding after surgery can be controlled with firm pressure and a surgical bandage such as gauze and tape. The bandage should be changed 2-3 times per day, depending on the amount of drainage from the wound. If the wound is extremely swollen, red, inflamed, or bleeds excessively, please call our office.

IF BLEEDING IS NOT CONTROLLED AFTER FIRM PRESSURE IS APPLIED FOR 20 MINUTES, PLEASE CALL OUR OFFICE AT (386) 256-1444.

Swelling: 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 to the wound for 20 minutes per hour. Keep your bandage dry.

Wound Care: Leave the bandage applied by our office on for 24 hours. After removing the bandage, clean the area twice a day with warm, soapy and water and apply Polysporin ointment to the wound. **DO NOT** let a scab form. Keep the area moist with Polysporin ointment. Showering is permitted 24 hours after surgery. **DO NOT** go swimming or completely submerge the area in water until the sutures have been removed.

Skin Graft Care: Skin grafts should kept dry for at least 7 days after surgery to ensure that the absorbable suture material that holds the graft to the surgical defect does not dissolve with water. A small amount of water at intermittent times is not a problem, but a steady stream of water, such as a shower or bath, is not appropriate and will cause the graft to separate from the wound.

Skin grafts will become discolored and develop a brown to black crust over 5-7 days after placement of the graft. This crust will gradually separate from the health skin underneath to leave a pink colored graft during the interim phase of healing.

Gently cleanse the graft with warm soapy water twice a day. Do not saturate the graft. Apply antibiotic ointment (Polysporin or Mupirocin) on the skin graft twice day after cleansing. This is all the dressing that is needed after the initial bloody drainage has ceased. A bandage over the wound is not necessary unless you want to place this for cosmetic purposes. The more air that gets to the graft, the better.

The skin graft will mature over 6 months to 1 year and in most patients will almost look like the surrounding skin. Dermabrasion at 6 -8 weeks postoperatively can be performed by a dermatologist or plastic surgeon. Discuss this with your surgeon at your post-operative visit.

Scarring: Placement of a small amount of Vitamin E or Mederma ointment on the healed skin graft or surgical site is recommended twice a day starting 10 -14 days postoperatively and continuing for 4- 6 weeks. This promotes wound healing and will decrease the appearance of the scar.

Antibiotics: You may or may not have been prescribed antibiotics postoperatively, depending on the nature of your procedure. Antibiotics should be taken with food to avoid upset stomach. If you develop an upset stomach or have an allergic reaction, such as a rash, stop the antibiotics. There is no need to start on a different antibiotic.

Activities: Swimming is not recommended for at least 2 weeks due to bacteria in water and chlorine that will irritate the wound. Sweating and perspiring will affect wound healing. You should not do any strenuous work or work outs where excessive amounts of perspiration will involve the wound for 10-14 days after surgery for patients with simple closures or flaps and 2 -3 weeks for patients with skin grafts.

Pain Reliever: Pain relievers are only prescribed when extensive dermatological surgery has been performed. Pain medications should be taken with food. Aspirin, Ibuprofen, Advil, Aleve, Motrin, Naproxen, or other known analgesics that can thin the blood are not recommended for 7 days after surgery. Acetaminophen or Tylenol may be taken.