

Post-Operative Care

Our goals in performing excisional skin surgery are:

- a) to remove the abnormal or cosmetically displeasing part of the skin, and
- b) to produce a scar as imperceptible as possible.

You play a very important role in assuring good cosmetic healing after leaving the office. Some important principles to follow are:

1. A pressure dressing may have been applied to your wound to reduce immediate bleeding. **This dressing should be left on and dry for ___ 24 hours ___ 48 hours (no bathing or showering)** and then may be removed. After removing, check for extreme swelling of the wound, which could indicate bleeding deep in the wound. *After removing this dressing, if you do notice this extreme swelling, please notify us immediately.*
2. If bleeding occurs from the wound, hold firm pressure directly to the site with your fingertips over a clean cloth. Apply pressure for 20-30 minutes without letting up. If there is still bleeding, apply an ice pack for 20 minutes. *If the bleeding does not stop, notify us.*
3. In addition to the pressure bandage, Steri-Strips may have been applied to help take tension off the edge of the wound. If the Steri-Strips were applied, you should leave them on until they come off on their own.
4. To clean the wound:

___ Combine 1 teaspoon white vinegar and one cup of water. Soak a cotton ball, Q-tip or soft cloth in solution. Saturate the wound for about 2 minutes twice daily. Avoid vigorous rubbing by patting area dry.
OR
___ Wash gently with mild soap and water or peroxide.
5. After cleaning, apply a thick coat of Vaseline or Polysporin (we prefer you avoid Neosporin) to the wound at least four times a day. This will prevent wound drying and scab formation. Cover the wound with a bandage. Try to rotate the bandages so that they do not cause skin irritation.
6. Check your wound daily for evidence of infection. *If you experience severe pain, fever over 101° F, or notice pus draining from your surgical site, please contact us by calling 205.871.7332.*

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Post-Operative Care (continued)

7. **Dehiscence.** If your wound pops open, call us as soon as possible. Although your wound may appear well healed in 1-2 weeks, it will take 2-3 months for good healing to occur. During that time you should avoid activities that cause excessive tension across or stretching of the surgical site, such as heavy lifting or strenuous exercise.
8. Your scar may be very noticeable initially, but with time (usually several months) the pink color will fade and irregularities become smoother.

You should return in _____ days for suture removal and/or wound check.

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