



POST-OP WOUND CARE INSTRUCTIONS

Wound Care:

- The pressure bandage should remain in place **for 48 hours (2 days) and DO NOT GET IT WET.** If the bandage loosens prior to that, carefully re-tape the bandage.
- After 48 hours you can shower normally. The bandage can be removed, and the area can get wet, allowing gentle soap to cleanse the area. **DO NOT SCRUB** the area. Pat dry. Apply ointment with a Q- Tip to the wound **twice daily** and cover with a band-aid or non-stick Telfa pad and tape (Hypafix). **(Do not apply ointment with fingers. AVOID NEOSPORIN** as this has been known to cause allergic reactions). This should be repeated until follow up appointment.
- **DO NOT** allow the wound to remain open to the air and **DO NOT** allow a scab to form over the area. This actually impairs wound healing and increases scar formation.
- Keep the area elevated and do not lay on the side you had the surgery for the first 48 hours. This will help reduce swelling and bruising.
- **DO NOT** participate in water activities such as swimming until the wound is healed. **DO NOT** soak the wound in a bathtub, hot tub, or pool until the sutures are removed.

BLEEDING:

- If you experience bleeding, apply direct, firm pressure to the area constantly for 30 minutes. NO peeking! If the area is still bleeding after 30 minutes, repeat for another 30 minutes, if this does NOT stop the bleeding, call the office immediately or go to the nearest emergency room.

PAIN:

- Post-operative pain is possible. You may take Tylenol Extra Strength 500 mg, two tablets every 4-6 hours as needed (if no allergy to Tylenol or no history of liver disease). **AVOID IBUPROFEN (Motrin, Advil), NAPROXEN (Aleve), ASPIRIN** (unless you are already taking it for conditions unrelated to your surgery) and **SUPPLEMENTS SUCH AS VITAMIN E AND GINSENG** if possible, as these may increase postoperative bleeding. However, **DO NOT DISCONTINUE** your regular Aspirin or prescription blood thinners such as warfarin (Coumadin) or Plavix.
- Ice packs can be applied to the area for 20 minutes every hour while you are awake, directly over the bandage for the first 24 hours. This will help reduce swelling, bruising and pain.

GRAFT:

- If you have a graft, leave pressure dressing in place for 48 hours. After 48 hours, you may remove the outer, white, dressing. **DO NOT** attempt to remove the Xeroform (yellow dressing). **DO NOT** get the graft site wet until you return for your office visit. Your surgeon will give you individual instructions on the care of your graft site.

ACTIVITY RESTRICTIONS:

- Rest and take it easy the first 48 hours.
- You should **AVOID** any vigorous activity, heavy lifting, exercise, straining, or anything that gets your blood pressure up for the first week after surgery. This significantly increases the risk of postoperative bleeding and the risk of the sutures opening up. **This will also include golfing.**
- **DO NOT** drink alcoholic beverages for 48 hours.

****ANY QUESTIONS, CONCERNS OR IF YOU HAVE EXCESSIVE DISCOMFORT, BRUISING, BLEEDING, OR REDNESS CONTACT OUR OFFICE AT (423) 712-9301 TO REACH OUR PHYSICIAN ON CALL****

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE WOUND HEALING PROCESS

When will my scar start to fade?

It takes a full year for the healing process to be complete. Most of the significant changes are in the first 6 months. Your scar will go through several stages of healing before becoming the final result.

When will the area of my surgery feel normal again?

It can take 1-2 years for the nerves to "settle down". Small superficial nerves are always cut during the removal of the cancer. As they grow back you may experience numbness, tingling or a crawling sensation (paresthesias). Some areas may never gain full feeling back. This is unavoidable and normal.

Why does my scar feel lumpy?

You may feel bumps and lumps under the skin. This is normal and is due to the dissolvable sutures under the surface of the skin. These deep sutures take several months to completely dissolve and the scar will not be smooth until this time. Occasionally a red bump forms along the suture line when a dissolvable suture works its way to the surface. This is only temporary, and applying a warm compress to the area usually helps it resolve. If it does not resolve, please call us.

Why is my scar puffy?

Sometimes 1-3 months after surgery a scar will become raised or "puffy". These scars will often benefit from a small steroid-based injection or minor surgical revision. If needed, this is usually performed 3-6 months after surgery. If this is something you think you may require, please do not hesitate to call us for an appointment.

Can my wound open up?

During the first several weeks following your surgery, your wound is fragile. Be careful not to engage in activities that put tension on the wound, or to pull or tug on it, as it could break open. It will take the area a full 6 months to return to 95% of its original strength.

Why is it hard to breathe through my nose?

If you had surgery on or near your nose, the swelling inside the nose may persist for several months. Initially this may feel like a lump inside the nose but will shrink with time.

When may I apply make-up or sunscreen?

You may apply make-up and/or sunscreen after the sutures are removed and the wound is completely healed (no open or oozing areas). Once healed, **good** sun protection with a mineral sunscreen containing zinc oxide and/or titanium dioxide as the main active ingredient(s) is important as the 'new skin' in the wound area is especially sensitive to sun.

Should I use anti-scar creams or massage?

Once you begin your dressing changes in the days immediately following your surgery, applying 100% pure petroleum jelly (Vaseline), Mupirocin ointment (prescription), or polysporin ointment will aid in wound healing. **DO NOT** use Neosporin. Once your sutures are removed, you can begin using a 100% silicone scar gel or gel sheets (sold in office and available over-the-counter). If irritation occurs from any of these products, discontinue them. Daily massage of the scar for 10-15 minutes a day can help the scar relax. You should wait at least 3 weeks before starting massage to avoid stress on the incision site.

Will I have another skin cancer?

You have demonstrated the ability to have a skin cancer. Your best defense is to see your dermatology provider on a regular basis. Regular skin checks with one of our board-certified dermatologists, physician assistants or nurse practitioners can detect skin cancers before they are readily noticeable to you. Prevention is key and good sun protection, including sunscreen is crucial.

Remember it takes a full year for your final result. Patience is the key, but if any time you feel you need to be seen or just need reassurance, do not hesitate to call: 423-712-9301