

Post-op Care for Sutured Wounds

Daily cleaning and wound care

Remove the dressing in 36-48 hours. If the dressing sticks to the wound, you may pour water over the dressing to make removal easier. A small amount of dried blood on the dressing or on the wound is normal. A small amount of bleeding may also occur when the dressing is removed.

Clean the wound twice a day with mild soap and water. A Q-tip works well for this. The goal of this is to remove any crusting or scab, as this will aid in healing.

After cleaning, pat dry and **apply Vaseline, Aquaphor ointment or Prescription ointment (if given) to the wound. Continue the cleaning and ointment application at least twice a day until you return for suture removal.**

Bathing and getting the surgical area wet is safe starting 2 days after surgery. If the area gets wet, make sure to pat the area dry, apply ointment, and replace any wet bandage with a new dry one.

The surgical site may be left uncovered after the second day, as long as it is kept moist with ointment at all times. If ointment is getting on bedding and clothing, or if you prefer to keep the site concealed from view, you can continue to cover with a simple Band-Aid or a Telfa (nonstick) pad and tape.

Bleeding

A small amount of bloody drainage on the bandage is normal for the first 2 days. **If heavy bleeding occurs, remove all bandaging and apply direct firm pressure with gauze on the bleeding area for 20 minutes without peeking.** If bleeding doesn't stop, elevate the involved area and repeat another round of pressure. If bleeding is still not improved, please contact us.

Activity

It is advisable to **refrain from strenuous activity or excessive stretching of the wound in the first week after surgery.** Strenuous activity includes heavy lifting, bending over, or activities that raise your heart rate or blood pressure. Once the sutures are removed, you may ease back into your normal activities. Smoking and nicotine will compromise wound healing - abstaining or greatly reducing your use in this critical post-operative period will allow for optimal wound healing.

Pain

You will experience pain for the first 2 days after surgery. Extra-strength Tylenol (acetaminophen) can be used as directed on the medication bottle. If a prescription pain medication has been prescribed to you, follow the label directions. Avoid aspirin or ibuprofen as they increase the chances of bleeding and bruising.

Swelling

Significant swelling may occur, especially if the surgery is close to the eyes or lips. It is common for eyes to swell shut. The swelling often peaks in the morning 2-3 days after surgery. To minimize swelling, the first 48 hours after surgery are critical. Apply an ice or cold pack (wrapped in a towel) to the surgical area for 10 minutes every hour or so. Head elevation (sleeping with 1-2 extra pillows under your head) will minimize post-operative eye swelling. Bruising can also appear in the same manner and persist for up to 2 weeks following surgery.

Questions?

Please call our office if pain gets progressively worse after 3 days or if there is increasing swelling, fever, redness, or pus drainage. Our direct office number is **(714) 524-9700**. If after business hours, please call your Mohs surgeon directly.

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