

Signature Dermatology

How to Care for Your Surgical Wound

1. A pressure dressing has been applied to reduce bleeding.
 - a. If you **do NOT** take any blood thinners, the dressing should be left on for **24 hours**.
 - b. If you **DO** take blood thinners, the dressing should be left on for **48 hours**.
2. Until this dressing is removed, do not get the dressing wet. Avoid showering and bathing.
3. Once the dressing is removed, begin the following wound care **ONCE A DAY** until healed:
Approximately 2-3 weeks for most wounds, 4 weeks for grafts
 - a. Combine 1 teaspoon white vinegar with 1 cup of water.
 - b. Soak a cotton ball, Q-tip, or a clean soft cloth in the solution.
 - c. Remove all bandages and saturate the wound with this solution for about 2 minutes.
 - d. Pat the area dry and avoid vigorous rubbing.
 - e. Apply a generous amount of plain Vaseline. Keep Vaseline on the wound at all times.
 - f. Cover with a band aid or other bandage.
 - g. If Steri-Strips were applied, follow steps A-E and replace strips weekly for 1 month.
4. Sutures:
 - ☐ Are all dissolvable and do not require removal.
 - ☐ Return to the office in _____ days for suture removal.
 - ☐ Remove the sutures at home in _____ days.
5. To avoid bleeding:
 - a. Avoid activities that would increase your heart rate or blood pressure for the first 48 hours.
 - b. If your surgical site is on your face or scalp, avoid tipping your head below the level of your heart for an extended period of time.
6. To allow for proper wound healing and to prevent excessive scarring, avoid vigorous physical activity that places strain and tension at your surgical site:
 - a. For 24-48 hours for surgical sites above the neck
 - b. For 3 weeks for surgical sites on the neck and below
7. Your scar may be very noticeable initially, but with time (usually several months) the pink color will fade and irregularities become smoother. It is normal for the incision to initially appear “peaked” or “bumpy” due to suture placement, but the scar will flatten over time. **Make sure to keep the scar out of the sun** (and wear sunscreen) because sun exposure will prolong redness and cause darkening.
8. If you experience pain after your procedure, we recommend two 325mg tablets of Tylenol (acetaminophen) by mouth every 6 hours. If still experiencing pain, we recommend adding ibuprofen (up to 800mg every 8 hours) as long as you do not have a medical condition that prevents you from taking Tylenol and/or ibuprofen. If so, please call your doctor to discuss pain management.
9. **If you notice bleeding:**
 - a. If your original dressing is on, leave it in place.
 - b. Hold firm pressure directly over the site for 20 minutes continuously without releasing pressure prior to 20 minutes to check the site.
 - c. **DO NOT** place towels or stacked gauze between the bandage and your fingers when holding pressure as this prevents the necessary level of direct pressure.
 - d. After 20 minutes, gently release pressure and check for bleeding.
 - e. If there is still bleeding, repeat steps 1 through 5 once more.
 - f. If there is still bleeding after holding pressure for 20 minutes twice, contact the on-call physician or go to your nearest emergency room.
10. **If you notice worsening redness or other drainage:**
 - a. Infections after Mohs surgery are uncommon but can occur. It is normal for wounds to have some pinkness around them as they are healing. Signs or symptoms of an infection include spreading redness, worsening tenderness, draining pus, and fevers.

Please contact the office if you have questions or concerns. Please be prepared to provide a photo of your wound.