

SANTA BARBARA SKIN INSTITUTE

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POST-OPERATIVE WOUND CARE INSTRUCTIONS WITH SUTURES

Bandage:

- After 48 hours, begin to change the dressing once daily until you return to our clinic.
- First, cleanse the wound with gentle soap and water, and then dry it with a Q-tip or gauze.
- Apply either Polysporin, Aquaphor, or Vaseline on wound. **Do not use Neosporin.**
- Cut a piece of Telfa non-stick gauze and apply over top of wound.
- Place hypoallergenic paper tape over top the Telfa to create an airtight bandage.
- Hypafix Tape is another easy to use tape if your skin does not react to tape.
- We recommend Federal Drug as they regularly stock the above bandaging supplies.

Expectations:

- Swelling, redness, yellowish discharge, pain and/or tenderness are all normal and will decrease in a few days.
- It is normal to have swelling and bruising around the surgical site. The bruising will fade in approximately 10-14 days. Elevate the area to reduce swelling. Swelling is generally most significant the morning after surgery.

Bleeding:

- Bleeding through the bandage is not alarming.
- If bleeding occurs, apply firm uninterrupted pressure with an ice pack for 20-30 minutes.
- If bleeding continues after two attempts of application of pressure, call our office

Pain:

- Take 2 Tylenol every 4 hours as needed for pain, unless your primary physician has instructed you not to use Tylenol.
- Apply ice packs to the area for 15 minutes every hour for the first 24 hours while awake.

Things to Avoid:

- Avoid activities which increase your heart rate/extensive exercise for at least one week.
- Avoid sleeping with your head flat, keep head elevated above heart for the first few days.
- Avoid Aspirin containing products and NSAIDS such as Advil, Motrin, Ibuprofen, and Aleve for the first 48 hours after surgery.
- Do not smoke for 3 weeks; smoking is detrimental to wound healing.

Infection:

- If swelling, redness, and/or tenderness persists for more than a few days OR increases, contact our office, as these symptoms could represent infection.
- Call our office and ask for RN or MA if you have any questions or concerns

Wounds on the Forehead or Scalp

- Headaches are common in the first few days after having surgery on the scalp. We recommend starting Tylenol immediately after surgery to help prevent headaches/pain.
- After having surgery on the forehead, it is common to also experience bruising/swelling of the adjacent eyelids.
- Recommend elevating for the first few days after surgery to reduce bleeding, bruising, and swelling.

Wounds on the Cheeks, Nose, or Eyelids

- You should expect bruising and swelling after surgery on the cheeks, nose, and eyelids.
- We recommend icing and elevating for a few days after surgery to reduce bleeding, bruising, and swelling.
- Swelling of the nose can sometimes restrict breathing through the nose after surgery. This should improve significantly in the first week; however, residual swelling may take a few weeks to resolve.
- Swelling of the eyelids can sometimes restrict one's vision. Icing and elevating can help to reduce swelling. Do not drive if your vision is restricted.

Wounds on the Lips or Chin

- You should expect significant bruising and swelling after surgery, particularly on the lips.
- We recommend icing and elevating for a few days after surgery to reduce bleeding, bruising, and swelling.
- Try to keep your lips / chin as immobile as possible. Refrain from laughing, smiling and yawning for 3 weeks.
- Eat soft foods for the first 24 hours and take small bites of food for the entire three weeks. Make sure to rinse your mouth after eating to avoid getting food on the wound.
- When brushing your teeth, you should use a child's toothbrush or use mouthwash to prevent stretching of surgery site.