

Care of Wounds With Sutures

Bandage:

1. Beginning in 48 hours, remove the dressing once a day around normal bathing time and wash gently with soap and water. Pat dry.
2. Apply ointment (Polysporin, Vaseline, or Aquaphor) to the surface of the wound. **Do not use Neosporin or hydrogen peroxide.**
3. Cover the ointment with a non-stick Band-Aid or create your own bandage using Telfa non-stick gauze and paper tape. Be sure all four sides are sealed with an adhesive bandage. This will prevent scabbing.

Change dressing daily until your next appointment or for: _____

Expectations:

- Swelling, redness, yellowish discharge, pain and/or tenderness are all normal and will decrease over the next few days.
- Elevate the area to reduce swelling. Swelling is generally most significant the morning after surgery and will improve with time.

Bleeding:

- Bleeding through the bandage is not alarming.
- If bleeding occurs, apply firm uninterrupted pressure with an ice pack for 20 minutes. If bleeding continues, apply pressure for another 20 minutes.
- Call our office if bleeding continues after **two rounds** of application of pressure.

Pain:

- Take 2 extra strength acetaminophen (Tylenol) every 4-6 hours as needed for pain unless your primary care provider has instructed you not to use acetaminophen.
- Okay to apply ice packs to the area for 15 minutes every hour for the first 24 hours while awake **unless you have a graft.**

Things to Avoid:

- Avoid extensive exercise and activities which increase your heart rate for at least 1 week.
- Avoid blood thinning medications for 24–48 hours post-operatively. Do not resume until you have gone 24 full hours without bleeding. If directed otherwise by your primary care provider please discuss with our office before leaving today. These medications include: Aspirin, NSAIDs such as ibuprofen (Advil and Motrin) and naproxen (Aleve), and prescription blood thinners such as Eliquis, Xarelto, and Plavix.
- Do not smoke for 3 weeks post operatively. Smoking is detrimental to wound healing.

Signs of Infection:

Call our office during business hours (Mon-Fri 8:00am - 5:00 pm) and ask for a medical assistant or after business hours and ask for the doctor on call if any of the following signs are present.

- If swelling, redness, and/or tenderness persist for more than a few days, or if they increase or begin again after improving.
- Fever and/or chills.
- If the site is hot to touch.

Wounds on the Forehead or Scalp:

- Headaches are common during the first few days post-operatively. Begin taking Tylenol immediately after surgery to help prevent headaches/pain.
- After having surgery on the forehead it is common to experience bruising and/or swelling of the eyelids.
- Keep head elevated, especially during sleeping, for 3-5 days post operatively to reduce bleeding, bruising, and swelling.

Wounds on the Cheeks, Nose, or Eyelids:

- Expect bruising and swelling on the cheeks, nose, and eyelids.
- Apply ice packs to the area for 15 minutes every hour for the first 24 hours while awake **unless you have a graft**. Okay to continue icing over the next few days as well as needed.
- Keep head elevated, especially during sleeping, for 3-5 days post operatively to reduce bleeding, bruising, and swelling.
- Swelling of the nose can sometimes restrict breathing through the nose. This should improve significantly in the first week. Residual swelling may take a few weeks to months to resolve.
- Swelling of the eyelids can sometimes restrict vision. This should improve significantly in the first week, and will continue to improve in the following few weeks. Icing and elevating can help reduce swelling. **Do not drive if your vision is restricted.**

Wounds on the Lips or Chin:

- Expect significant bruising and swelling after surgery, particularly on the lips.
- Try to keep your lips and chin as immobile as possible. Refrain from or at least limit laughing, smiling, and yawning for 3 weeks.
- Eat soft foods for the first 24 hours and take small bites of food for the 3 weeks.
- When brushing your teeth use a child's toothbrush or use mouthwash to prevent stretching of the surgery site.

Patient Specific Instructions: