

Wound Care Instructions

The importance of good wound care following surgery cannot be overemphasized. Taking good care of your wound will help it to heal quickly and will also minimize scarring.

Standard wound care:

- The bandage that was applied after your procedure should stay dry and in place for 24 hours following the surgery.
- After removing the bandage, very gently clean the wound with soap and water. After cleansing apply a thick layer of Vaseline (preferred over antibiotic ointment) with a Q-tip. Cover the Vaseline with a piece of non-stick pad (Telfa) and paper tape. Small wounds may be dressed with a Band-Aid.
- Repeat this process of cleaning and dressing the wound at least once a day until the stitches are removed. (If your wound is healing in by itself, and sutures were not used, then the healing process usually takes several weeks, and the cleaning and dressing routine should be continued on a daily basis until the wound is completely healed.)

Steri-Strips

- If Steri-strips were applied to your wound, wait 24 hours before removing the pressure bandage that was applied following surgery.
- You may get the wound and Steri-Strips wet in the shower. After showering, gently pat the wound and Steri-Strips dry. No additional care is needed. When the strips fall off, throw them away.

It is important that you are aware of some things that may occur after surgery:

- **Bleeding:** A small amount of bleeding or oozing in the first 24 hours after surgery is common and normal. To minimize the risk of excessive bleeding:
 - Limit activity for at least 24 hours.
 - If surgery was on your face, head or neck, avoid stooping or bending for 24 to 48 hours and avoid lifting more than 10 pounds until sutures are removed.
 - If surgery was on the arm or leg, keep that extremity elevated as much as possible and limit weight bearing. Avoid lifting more than 10 pounds until sutures are removed.

If bleeding occurs, apply firm constant pressure on the bandage for 20 min. If excessive bleeding continues, or if the bleeding is associated with a sharp pain, please contact us at (703)723-5700.

- **Swelling and bruising:** Swelling and bruising occurs as a normal response to injury and wound healing. It is usually at its worst 48 to 72 hours following surgery. An ice pack or a cold compress may be soothing especially around the lips or eyes. Apply ice or a cool compress 20 minutes on then 20 minutes off as needed, especially during the first 24 hours.
- **Pain:** Pain following surgery generally consists of an aching sensation as the local anesthesia wears off. In nearly all cases, extra-strength Tylenol will relieve this discomfort. Ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) can also help relieve the pain if necessary.

Infection: Fortunately, wound infections are uncommon. Signs of infection are increasing pain, fever > 101, swelling, redness or yellowish drainage (pus) several days after surgery. If you are concerned about the possibility of an infection, please contact us at **(703) 723-5700**. If the office is closed, follow the instructions to page Dr. Todd (wait for the prompt and press "4").

Your nurse today was : _____