

THE DERMATOLOGY INSTITUTE OF BOSTON

POST-OPERATIVE WOUND CARE INSTRUCTION FOR EXCISIONS

o Items needed for wound care:

- Vaseline/Petroleum jelly ointment: a new, clean tube/tub to minimize risk of infection
- Telfa dressing (non-stick gauze), sterile gauze pads, and a medical tape such as Hypafix, paper tape, or silk tape
- Band-Aids as an alternative to gauze and medical tape

o Daily wound care steps:

1. Keep the bandage clean and dry. Leave on the original bandage for a minimum of 24 hours, and in some cases, you may be instructed to leave it on for 48 hours.
2. Gently remove the old dressing. If the dressing sticks to the wound, gently wet the dressing with water, then remove.
3. Cleanse the wound gently with warm water and soap. Rinse well to avoid irritation of the skin or wound.
4. If your wound is on the legs, it is preferred that in the shower, you keep the wound away from the shower water runoff from your body and instead wash the area separately once the rest of your shower is complete.
5. Once clean, blot the wound dry with a clean towel or gauze.
6. Apply a thin layer of Vaseline/Petroleum jelly ointment. This will help the wound stay moist, which speeds wound healing. You do not want the wound to crust and dry out.
7. Cut non-stick gauze, such as Telfa, to the size of the wound and use tape to secure it. Alternatively, the wound can be covered with an appropriately sized Band-Aid
8. Occasionally, the surgery is done on sites that are difficult to keep covered with a bandage. Even if you do not bandage the site, it is still important to coat it with Vaseline. If uncovered, the site should be coated with Vaseline a few times per day to ensure it remains moist and prevent infection.
9. After suture removal, you usually do not need to keep the wound bandaged, but should still treat the area gently.

● Pain medications

- o You should take acetaminophen (Tylenol) after surgery because it will reduce the pain without increasing the risk of bleeding. We typically recommend taking acetaminophen 500 mg as soon as you get home to decrease your discomfort as the numbing medication wears off. The first evening is when patients generally have the most discomfort, so you may want to take two of the acetaminophen 500 mg tablets before bed. It is important that you **do not exceed the number of acetaminophen tablets recommended** on the bottle. Most patients do not need more than Tylenol for pain control, but in some cases, the combination of acetaminophen in

addition to an NSAID pain reliever (ibuprofen/Advil, or naproxen/Aleve) may be more effective than Tylenol alone. We ask that you avoid aspirin as it can increase the risk of bleeding.

- o If your pain is not adequately controlled with over-the-counter pain medications, please call the office.
- **Swelling and bruising**
 - o It is common to see swelling and bruising, especially in the first few days after surgery. Sometimes this can be decreased by keeping the body site of the surgery elevated. For example, this could be done by placing an extra pillow under your arm or leg, which will help decrease swelling and discomfort
- **Follow up**
 - o It is important to follow up as instructed after surgery. Most patients will return for suture removal in 1-2 weeks after surgery
- **Minimizing scar/hypertrophic scar**
 - o To reduce the chances of having a hypertrophic (elevated/raised) scar, we recommend applying silicone gel (e.g., ScarAway gel) to the scar once daily for 6 weeks after waiting 1 month from the day of the procedure.

When to call the Dermatology Institute of Boston:

1. If you have post-operative pain not adequately controlled by the recommended pain medication
2. If you have bleeding that soaks through the bandage and has not stopped with 20 minutes of firm, consistent pressure. Or, if the bleeding is associated with a firm lump/mass under the wound
3. If a few days after surgery, you develop signs of infection such as increasing or persistent pain, swelling, redness, purulent drainage at the wound site, fever, or if you feel ill
4. If the stitches holding your wound together break

Swelling, bruising, soreness, mild itching, and a pink wound can all be normal in the post-operative period. It is also important to remember that it takes months for a scar to mature. A wound that appears very dramatic immediately after surgery may be very much improved after 12 months.

If you have a medical concern after your procedure, call the Dermatology Institute of Boston at (857)317-2057 during work hours, and our staff will answer and triage your call. If you have an urgent call after hours, you may call this same number and select the option to be forwarded to the cell phone of the physician on call.