



## Wound Care Advice

- For discomfort after your local anesthetic has worn off, you may take acetaminophen (Tylenol) and/or apply an ice pack.
- If there is significant bleeding, remove the dressing and press *firmly and continuously* on your wound using gauze or a clean cloth for 10-20 minutes. Most bleeding will stop with sufficient direct pressure and time. If the bleeding continues despite prolonged pressure, contact our clinic or consider going to the Emergency Department if we are unavailable.
- Keep your wound dry and leave the dressing on for 24 hours. After that you may resume normal bathing.
- Apply an ointment to your wound once a day to keep it moist and promote better healing. Protect it and keep the ointment in place with an adhesive bandage. Continue until sutures are removed and often a few days after that.
- On the face, it may be easier to manage without a dressing. In that case apply ointment two or more times per day to ensure that the wound remains moist. Gently clean any crust or build up that forms on the wound with a cloth and water before reapplying fresh ointment.
- An antibiotic containing ointment is usually not necessary and is associated with the risk of a contact allergy reaction. Vaseline or Aquaphor are less expensive and just as effective.
- Consider purchasing dressings that are waterproof and will allow for bathing (shower not bath). They can often be worn for multiple days and will also keep your wound moist without the need for an ointment. Decreased time and effort related to wound care often justify their increased cost.
- If your wound becomes increasingly *red and painful*, especially several days after your procedure, it may be infected. Please contact our clinic (or another care provider if we are unavailable) since you may need antibiotics.

### If you have had stitches:

- Avoid excess strain over the wound while the stitches are in place and for two weeks following suture removal.
- If your wound opens and especially if *there is bleeding*, please contact our clinic (or another care provider if we are unavailable). Keep the wound covered with ointment and an adhesive bandage.
- You will be given the option of a visit for wound review and suture removal if some of your sutures are non-absorbable. Alternatively, you can have your primary care provider remove them, and a competent friend or family member is o.k. too.
- Optimal timing of suture removal is about 7 days on the head and neck, and 10-14 days on the rest of the body. Below the knee healing can be quite slow, and sutures can sometimes be left in place up to 21 days

### For shave and electrosurgery based procedures (no stitches):

- Your wound will look like a deep scrape. This type of wound can be slow to heal in some body areas and appropriate care is very important. Keep some ointment on the wound until all scabs or crusts are gone. Wounds on the face can be left uncovered but make sure to reapply the ointment 2-3 times a day. Apply a cover dressing for sites off the face. Remove the dressing prior to bathing. Wash the site with water, pat dry, and then reapply ointment and a fresh cover dressing. Long wear waterproof dressings are particularly good for these types of wounds, since they heal fastest when left undisturbed. Average healing time is 1-2 weeks on the face, 3 weeks on the arms and torso, and 4 to 6 weeks on the legs.

*Will there be a scar? Very superficial wounds such as shaves may heal with only a subtle change in skin color. All other deeper wounds rely on the formation of scar tissue for proper healing. Although a scar is often inevitable, every effort is made to minimize its functional and cosmetic impact.*

After hours phone access to a provider is available for emergencies, particularly those related to surgical procedures. Dial (250)740-2125. Press 9 when you hear the voice message.