



Metrolina Dermatology  
and Skin Surgery Specialists

## Post-operative Wound Care Instructions Second Intention Healing

For the **first 24-48 hours** after surgery:

1. Go home, take it easy. Minimize exertion. Do not do anything that requires you to bend, strain, or lift.
2. Keep the pressure bandage/surgical site dry
3. Icing instructions: apply **ICE** to the area, 15-20 minutes every hour until bedtime for 2 days (48 hours)
  - Ice will help reduce pain and swelling
  - A bag filled with crushed ice and wrapped in a thin towel or frozen peas/vegetables works well

**Keep surgical site dressing in place and dry for the first 24-48 hours**

Starting 24-48 hours after surgery, AT LEAST ONE TIME DAILY:

After 24-48 hours, you may bathe regularly at this point and allow the wound to get wet (if on the lower leg, keep covered while bathing)

1. Wash your hands with antibacterial soap and water before changing the bandage
2. Wash the surgical site with hydrogen peroxide for 7 days then switch to antibacterial soap and water, using a Q-tip to remove any crusts from the wound. **\*\* Stop using hydrogen peroxide after 7 days\*\***
3. Apply a thin layer of vaseline or aquaphor with a Q-tip to the site
4. Cover the site with a clean non-stick pad/bandage (such as Telfa) and secure with paper tape
5. Repeat this daily until the wound is healed. Small wounds may heal in 2-3 weeks. Large wounds can take up to 6-8 weeks or more. After the wound is healed, bandaging can be stopped
6. Starting after 4 weeks: Cover wound 50% of day and leave uncovered 50% of day
7. Sunscreen and make-up can be applied to the surgical area after bandaging ends

**All wounds normally drain** (the larger the wound, the more drainage) which is why we insist on daily dressing changes. This drainage will decrease after the first week. A newly healed wound has a shiny look to the surface and is dark pink to red in color. The redness will fade over the next few months. Sometimes it can take 6 months to one year to fade completely. Itching or tingling is common and is a normal experience with healing.

**For PAIN:** Take 1-2 Extra Strength Tylenols or, if given, the prescription pain medication as needed. Do not take any aspirin for at least 48 hours (unless prescribed by your doctor) as these may cause bleeding. Minimize alcohol intake for 24 hours.

**For BLEEDING:** If bleeding occurs following surgery, apply constant pressure on the bandage for 20 minutes! That will usually stop minor bleeding. If the bleeding does not stop, notify our office immediately! If the bandage is saturated it may be replaced

**For SWELLING:** Swelling occurs because of injury to the skin. Using ice packs for the 48-72 hours will help reduce swelling. Swelling at the site may take 3 months for **final** resolution (the length of time it takes for the buried sutures to dissolve)

**Call the office immediately if any of these symptoms occur.**

- severe itching with a rash: this can indicate sensitivity to the ointment or to the bandage tape
- fever, extreme or significant increase in pain, expanding redness, or pus draining. Clear yellow/orange drainage is normal; thick cloudy drainage needs to be evaluated. The base of deeper wounds may develop a whitish layer of fibrin (does not wipe off) which is normal for many wounds.

**It is an old wives tale that a wound heals better when exposed to air. If kept clean and covered with ointment and a bandage, the wound will heal faster, and with a nicer cosmetic result.**

\*\*\* In Case of Emergency or Uncontrolled Bleeding, please call the office for instructions on how to reach Dr. Haberle \*\*\*