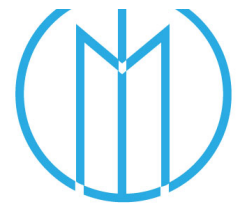


# Post-operative Wound Care Instructions

## Sutures



Metrolina Dermatology  
and Skin Surgery Specialist

### For the first 24 hours after surgery:

1. Go home, take it easy. Minimize exertion. Do not do anything that requires you to bend, strain, or lift.
2. Do not remove the pressure bandage that was applied to your surgical site
3. **Keep the pressure bandage/surgical site dry and in place for first 24 hours**
4. 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

### Starting 24 hours after surgery, TWO TIMES DAILY:

After 24 hours, you may bathe regularly at this point and allow the wound to get wet.

1. Wash your hands with antibacterial soap and water before changing the bandage
2. Wash the surgical site with hydrogen peroxide, 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
  - Repeat this daily for the indicated length of time according to the surgical site location (unless otherwise indicated by the doctor): Face & scalp – 5-7 days / Trunk & Extremities – 8-12 days
  - If the doctor used dissolvable sutures, they typically dissolve between 7-10 days
5. Sunscreen and make-up can be applied to the surgical area after bandaging ends

**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)

**For Infection:** Infection seldom occurs if following wound care instructions. Look for the following signs of infection: **Increased pain, increased swelling, increased redness, warmth of the skin, or excessive yellowish drainage several days after surgery.** Call the office immediately if any of these symptoms occur.

\* Note: some pain, swelling, and redness is normal after surgery. If they continue to persist and/or increase, call our office.

### **Activity:**

- Limit all activities for the first 24 hours and limit strenuous activities for the first 2 weeks following surgery. Limiting activities will help in the healing of your scar and cosmetic outcome.
- Keep the operative site elevated (if appropriate)
- If your surgery was on the face, head or neck: avoid bending or heavy lifting and straining, and sleep with your head and shoulders elevated on extra pillows
- If your surgery was on the lower leg: while elevating your leg, place a pillow underneath your knee to help alleviate pressure on your surgical site.

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