

Georgia Skin Center
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POST-OPERATIVE WOUND CARE INSTRUCTIONS

ACTIVITY:

1. **Keep bulk dressing on** and *as dry as possible* for the first **24 hours**.
2. **Apply an ice pack (frozen peas in a zip-lock bag)** to the surgical site, *10-15 minutes every hour after surgery* until bedtime. This will help reduce swelling and bruising after surgery. Avoid direct contact of ice pack with dressing by using a terrycloth towel wrapped around the ice pack.
3. **Some bleeding or drainage is normal following surgery.** If bleeding is severe, call us immediately. If the dressing is soaked through with blood (may occur within the first 24 hours), this is an indication of ***unusual bleeding***. Most bleeding can be stopped by applying direct pressure with clean gauze to the surgical site for 30 minutes (**NON-STOP**). If the bleeding does not stop after applying pressure for 30 minutes, please call us immediately and go to a nearby emergency room for assistance.
4. **Do not smoke or drink alcohol until healed.** **Avoid bending or stooping, heavy lifting, swimming or exercise** using the involved muscles of the surgical site until healed. The surgical area may pull or itch while it is healing for as long as 4 weeks. This is very common with suture surgery.

WOUND CARE, REGULAR BANDAGE:

1. Gently remove the bulk dressing after 24 hours. Thereafter, change the dressing 2 times daily.
2. Gently **cleanse the wound** with soap and water, and gently massage to remove all dried blood from wound.
3. Gently “blot dry” wound and apply petroleum jelly (Vaseline) or Aquaphor ointment with a Q-tip.
4. Cover with **Telfa dressing**, and then apply tape. Or, alternatively, cover with a band-aid if the wound is small enough. Should there be mild active bleeding, you are to apply another bulky dressing (using folded gauze and putting it over the Telfa dressing), then tape down.
5. Continue performing wound care until the wound has completely healed. This method will **keep the wound bed moist**, thus **avoiding** a hard scab formation. It may take longer to heal, but the ultimate appearance of the scar will be better.

WOUND CARE, TAPE DRESSING:

1. After 24 hours, gently remove the top-most (most superficial) bandage (the bulky one), if one is present.
2. **Do not remove the piece of tape that is directly in contact with (directly on) the skin.** It is protecting the stitches.
3. After 24 hours, you may shower with this tape dressing. Swimming, bathing, or otherwise submerging the surgical site in water is prohibited.
4. We will remove the tape at your follow-up visit. However, should the tape come off sooner, EITHER apply new paper tape (Micropore tape) OR apply petroleum jelly (Vaseline) or Aquaphor twice a day to the surgery site and cover the area with a band-aid or Telfa gauze (see regular bandage directions above).

INFECTION:

If you are on a prophylactic antibiotic peri-operatively, please remember to take your antibiotic as instructed.

Please notify us if marked swelling, redness, tenderness, “pus” or yellowish fluids from wound incisions, or a rash should develop at the wound site. Some bruising at the incision site is common. You may feel a hard or firm nodule or thickening of the operative site. This is normal and will eventually go away.

PAIN MANAGEMENT:

The surgical site may be sore for several days after the surgery. You may take ***Tylenol Extra-Strength***, as directed on the bottle, if needed for discomfort. ***DO NOT TAKE ASPIRIN, aspirin-containing pain medications, ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), or other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications (NSAIDS, such as naproxen) for 3-5 days after the surgery, as these may cause bleeding.***