

Care Following Your Surgery

Activity

- Avoid all strenuous activity and exercise (golf, tennis, swimming, yard work, vacuuming, lifting anything greater than 10 lbs) until your stitches are removed. Walking is an excellent light activity during recovery.

Bathing

- Keep our dressing in place and dry for the first 48 hours. Pat wash around the covered site.
- After 48 hours, soak the dressing in the shower and then gently remove the dressing. If you bathe in a tub, the bath should be brief.

Wound Care

- Always wash your hands with soap and water before your daily wound care.
- Gently remove your dressing and change the dressing every day (and whenever it becomes wet) according to these instructions:
 1. Gently clean the sutured area with cotton-tipped swabs dipped in warm soapy water or hydrogen peroxide solution. If it is an open (non-sutured) wound, clean with saline (one teaspoon of table salt in two cups of warm water).
 2. As you clean the area, remove all crusty material. If you cannot easily remove the crust, soak the area with wet gauze for 15 minutes. Thick crusts or scab allowed to build up on the wound will delay healing, so keep the wound clean and moist.
 3. After you have removed crusty material, pat the area dry with clean gauze or cotton-tipped swabs.
 4. Use a clean cotton swab to liberally apply plain Vaseline/petrolatum ointment or aquaphor™ ointment.
 5. Cover the area with a loose band-aid, allowing a little air above the wound.
 6. If the wound is drying out with once a day care or the wound is crusty, then reapply ointment.

Discomfort

- To relieve discomfort, you may take acetaminophen (Tylenol™ or Extra-Strength Tylenol™) as directed. If acetaminophen does not relieve your discomfort, contact your physician. You may restart other non tylenol pain relievers, such as ibuprofen (Advil™ or Motrin™) or naproxen (Aleve™) 2 days after surgery.

Restrictions

- If your wound is in the **beard area**, do not shave over the suture line until the stitches are removed.
- If your wound is in the **scalp**, refrain from washing your hair for three days after surgery.
- For the best wound healing and cosmetic results, do not smoke for at least two weeks after surgery.
- If your **surgery is on your head**, keep your head higher than the rest of your body for the first two days after surgery. Do not lower your head below your waist if you bend over to pick up objects or tie your shoes. Bend your knees, not your waist to keep your head elevated.
- If your **surgery is on your arm or hand**, keep the area elevated above the level of the heart as much as possible. Use a sling if this helps remind you or 'elbow on the table' whenever possible.
- If your **surgery is on your lips or mouth**, avoid hot liquids and foods for the day of and first day after surgery (warm is better). You will eat soft foods for the first three days after surgery (examples- soup, scrambled eggs, tuna or chicken salad). Avoid chewing on the side of surgery. Be gentle when brushing your teeth. A straw may be helpful and ice chips in the mouth may help the swelling. The swelling will slowly decrease over 2-3 weeks.

Bleeding, Bruising and Swelling

- Your wound may 'ooze' a small amount of blood and stain the dressing, which is normal. However, if your wound bleeds so blood heavily soaks through to the outside of your bandage, leave the dressing in place and do the following:
 1. Place clean gauze, paper towel or face cloth on top of the bandage.
 2. Apply firm, continuous pressure directly over the wound for 20 minutes.
 3. Remove the gauze carefully, and if bleeding has stopped, redress the wound.
 4. If the bleeding does not stop or if the bleeding is severe, please notify us immediately.
- You may notice swelling and a bruise near or below the surgery site. It is especially common around the eye even if the surgery was on the scalp, forehead or nose. This is normal and will be most noticeable 24 to 72 hours after surgery, then begins to improve. Cool compresses over the bandaged area for 20 minutes a few times a day and sleeping with an extra pillow will help.

Infection

- It is normal for your wound to be slightly sore and pink.
- If the area becomes increasingly tender, very red or warm, or you have fever, contact Dr. Reisinger.

Any Questions or Concerns? Call 505-980-8738