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ACMS American College
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*Fellowship trained skin cancer
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The Dermatology and Skin Surgery Centers

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Post-Operative Wound Care Instructions

Wound care is performed **twice a day** - starting 24 hours after the procedure and until the sutures are removed. Please do not remove the original bandages until 24 hours after the procedure. The object of wound care is to prevent crusting or scab formation so the wound heals faster and results in an optimal scar.

- ✓ Cleanse the wound with Q-Tips dipped in distilled water. Gently remove any scab or crust that has formed since the last dressing change. Then dry the wound with Q-Tips and thickly apply enough Aquaphor Ointment to last until the next wound care cleansing occurs.
- ✓ Cut a non-stick pad to fit the size of the wound, and apply it over the Aquaphor. If the wound is still draining, you may put a small piece of gauze on top of the non-stick pad. Secure with non-allergic paper tape. If there is no oozing, you can apply a Band-Aid instead of a non-stick pad, as long as it adheres to the skin completely around the wound.
- ✓ Do not get the wound wet (except as instructed above) until 48 hours after the procedure.
- ✓ Oozing is normal during the first 24 hours after the procedure. If you experience bleeding, firmly apply continuous pressure and an ice pack for 30 minutes. If the wound is still bleeding, repeat two more times for a total of 1 ½ hours of both constant pressure and ice. If oozing persists, please call the office at 617- 787-0400.

IF THE SURGICAL AREA IS ON THE HEAD AND NECK:

Swelling and bruising are expected around and below the wound site. Depending on the extent of the bruising, it can last up to one week or more after the procedure.

1. Strictly no bending, lifting or exercising for 7 days following surgery. If surgery was performed on the forehead or temple, ANY activity causing pressure on the head will lead to swelling in the eyes and can prolong bruising.
2. Apply ice packs over the bandage for 5 – 10 minutes every hour during the waking hours for 24 hours after your surgery.
3. Sleep with your head elevated on 2-3 pillows for the first 3 days.

IF THE SURGICAL AREA IS ON THE ARM, LEG OR BACK:

Avoid bending, lifting or heavy exercising until the sutures are removed.

1. If the surgery was performed on the hand or leg, prolonged elevation of the extremity is important to avoid swelling.
2. If the surgery was performed on the leg or foot, apply an ace wrap from the site of the surgery down to and including your foot in order to avoid swelling in those areas.

If you are on Coumadin (warfarin) and you were given an antibiotic, you must have your TPT/INR level checked two days after starting the antibiotic. Please ask your Lab, Clinic or Primary Care Doctor to call our office at 617-787-0400 with your results. If you have any questions about your wound care, please also call us at 617-787-0400.