

Closed Wound Care Instructions (with ointment) – Day of Surgery

How to care for your wound:

- Keep the bandage in place for 24 hours (*unless otherwise instructed*). If the bandage becomes blood-tinged or loose, reinforce it with gauze and paper tape.
- Apply gentle pressure over the bandage for 10 minutes every hour for the next few hours. (*Refer to page 2 for management of bleeding*).
- Remove the bandage in 24 hours and begin wound care as follows (*remember to wash your hands with soap and water before handling your wound*):
 1. Rinse the sutured and/or stapled area with plain tap or soapy water.
 2. Dry the wound with a Q tip or gauze pad.
 3. Apply a layer of ointment (**Aquaphor Ointment** (preferred), Vaseline Petroleum Jelly, or Bacitracin Ointment) to the stitches and/or staples. A Q-tip can be used to apply this ointment. Do **NOT** use Neosporin Ointment.
 4. Cover the site with a sterile **non-stick pad and paper tape**. A Band-Aid can also be used to cover the wound. If you use a Band-Aid, please make sure it is large enough to cover the entire wound. Do **NOT** use regular gauze.
 5. Repeat the above steps (ie. wash, ointment, and bandage) **twice a day** until the wound no longer has any open areas or scabs (**at least 1 to 2 weeks**). Keeping the wound moist will expedite the healing process. Do **NOT** let the wound dry out.
- If you require medication to control pain, you may take Extra Strength Tylenol. Icing for 10 - 15 minutes every 2 hours can also help with pain. If Tylenol (and ice) does not provide relief after 2 - 3 hours, you can take Extra Strength Advil. However, Advil is a blood thinner so it is preferable to start with Tylenol first and only add Advil if necessary. If adding Advil to Tylenol provided relief, continue to take both medications together. Refer to the instructions on their containers for frequency and daily limit.
- It is normal to have swelling and bruising around the surgical site. The swelling and bruising usually peaks at 48 hours after surgery and then subsides in approximately 10 - 14 days. Elevate the area to reduce swelling if possible. Icing for 10 - 15 minutes every 2 hours can also help with swelling. (*Note: For surgery performed around the eyes such as the **cheek, nose, and forehead**, you may develop bruised and/or swollen eyelids*).
- Note: If the surgery was performed on your **chin and/or lip(s)**, try to keep this area as immobile as possible. Try to minimize smiling, laughing, and yawning, as these stress the sutured wound. Eat soft foods for the first 24 hours and take small bites of food for 3 weeks. When brushing your teeth, you should use a child's toothbrush or use mouth wash to prevent stretching of surgery site. Please do this for 3 weeks.

Please go to page 2 for information on restrictions, addressing possible complications, and the wound healing process.

Restrictions

- No strenuous activity for **1 week** following surgery (*unless otherwise instructed*). Strenuous activities include those that elevate your heart rate or blood pressure (ie. running, biking, weight lifting, etc).
- Do not drink alcoholic beverages for 48 hours. Alcohol is a blood-thinner.
- Do not smoke for 3 weeks. Smoking is detrimental to wound healing.
- Do not go swimming for 1 month following surgery to prevent infection.
- There are no dietary restrictions.

Addressing Possible Complications

Bleeding:

1. Leave the bandage in place.
2. Use tightly rolled up gauze or a cloth to apply direct pressure over the bandage for 20 minutes.
3. Reapply pressure for an additional 20 minutes if necessary.
4. Call the office or go to the nearest emergency room if pressure fails to stop the bleeding.
5. Use additional gauze and tape to maintain pressure once the bleeding has stopped.

Pain:

1. Post-operative pain should slowly get better, never worse.
2. A severe increase in pain may indicate a problem. Call the office if this occurs.

THE WOUND HEALING PROCESS

- Once the final bandages are removed, the scar will be red and firm (especially in the lip/chin area). This is normal and will fade in time. It might take 6-12 months for this to happen.
- Massaging the area will help the scar soften and fade quicker. Begin to massage the area 4 to 6 weeks after surgery. To massage, apply pressure directly and firmly over the scar with the fingertips and move in a circular motion. Massage the area 10 times a day for 30 seconds. Repeat until the scar is no longer firm.
- Approximately 6-8 weeks after surgery it is not uncommon to see the formation of “tender pimple-like” bump along the scar. This is normal. As the scar continues to mature and the stitches underneath the skin begin to dissolve, this might occur. Do not pick or squeeze, this will resolve on its own. Should one break open producing a small amount of drainage, apply ointment (Aquaphor Ointment (preferred), Vaseline Petroleum Jelly, or Bacitracin ointment) a few times a day until the wound is completely healed.
- Numbness, itchiness and sensitivity to temperature changes can occur after surgery. It might take 12-18 months for the feeling to return to normal. During this time, sensations of itchiness, tingling and occasional sharp pains might be noted. These feelings are normal and will subside once the nerves have completely healed.