
Post-Operative Wound Care

The importance of post-operative care to your surgical site cannot be over stressed. The care you take of yourself and your surgical wound is extremely important to the success of the procedure and to your recovery and well being.

There are several things that could happen following surgery.

1. **Bleeding:** Bleeding can occur following surgery. To reduce the possibility of bleeding, the following instructions are given:
 - a. Limit activities for at least 24 hours
 - b. Keep the operative site elevated
 - c. If surgery was on the face, head or neck:
 - Avoid stooping or bending
 - Avoid straining to have a bowel movement
 - Sleep with your head and shoulders elevated on extra pillows

Should bleeding occur, apply firm constant pressure on the bandage for 20 minutes. This should stop minor bleeding. If not, and you are concerned about bleeding, please call our office immediately.

2. **Swelling:** Swelling occurs because surgery has caused a wound and your body reacts to that injury. To reduce the amount of swelling that may occur:
 - a. Apply an ice pack for 20 minutes each hour during the waking hours. If you do not have an ice pack, fill a plastic bag with ice and wrap it in a thin towel.
 - b. Keep your bandage dry.
3. **Pain:** Postoperative pain for dermatological surgery is generally slight. In nearly all cases, a non-aspirin pain reliever such as Extra Strength Tylenol will relieve any pain you may experience.
4. **Infection:** The signs of infection are increased pain, swelling, redness, or yellowish drainage several days after surgery. Infection seldom occurs when the wound care instructions have been carefully followed.

Wound Care – Once Each Day

1. Wash your hands with soap and water.
2. Dab the wound or suture line with a cotton ball and warm water to remove any crusting from the area.
3. Dry the wound thoroughly with a clean soft cloth by blotting.
4. Apply a thin layer of Vaseline or Aquafor to surgical site.
5. Cover with a clean dry dressing.

There may be a scar and redness in the scar after surgery. This will decrease as healing progresses, but redness should be expected to last as long as six months. Everyone heals differently, and the final scar appearance depends on the individual's ability to heal. Some scars heal and can hardly be noticed while others become thick and/or tender. Due to the unpredictability in wound healing, the final appearance cannot be preoperatively ascertained. Therefore, no guarantees can be implied or stated as the final appearance of the surgical site.