



## **CARE FOLLOWING YOUR SKIN SURGERY**

### **ACTIVITY:**

- NO strenuous activities or exercise (includes golf, tennis, and swimming) until your sutures are removed (7-14 days). For example, do not lift anything greater than 10 pounds or perform vigorous aerobic exercise until your sutures are removed.
- If your surgery was on your head or neck, keep your head higher than the rest of your body for the first two days after surgery. For example, elevate your head with pillows when you lie down, and do not lower your head below your waist if you bend over to pick up objects or tie your shoes. Bend your knees and not your waist in order to keep your head elevated.

### **BATHING:**

- Keep the area of your surgery dry for the first 24 hours.
- After 24 hours, you may shower. Remove your bandage, and replace it after the shower. Avoid baths.

### **DISCOMFORT:**

- To relieve discomfort, you may take acetaminophen (for example, Tylenol™ or Extra-Strength Tylenol™) as directed – do not use Advil™ or aspirin. If acetaminophen does not relieve your discomfort, contact your physician
- If your doctor has given you a prescription for Tylenol™ with codeine or Percocet™, you may use this as directed.

### **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 heavily it soaks through to the outside of your bandage, do the following:
  - Place clean gauze on top of the bloody bandage.
  - Apply continuous pressure on gauze, directly over wound, for 20 minutes.
  - Remove the gauze carefully, and if bleeding has stopped, redress with wound care supplies.
  - If the bleeding does not stop or if the bleeding is severe, please contact your physician for further instructions. If there is substantial bleeding that does not resolve with pressure, please call 911 for immediate assistance.
- Expect bruising and swelling in the area of your surgery to be the most noticeable 48 to 72 hours after surgery. Bruising and swelling usually begin to lessen 4 to 5 days after surgery.
- If the swelling does not improve within a few days, or if the area becomes increasingly tender, contact your provider immediately.

**INFECTION:**

- It is normal for your wound to be slightly sore and pink.
- If the area becomes increasingly tender, red or warm, contact your physician.
- If you have a fever (temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius), chills or pus draining from your wound, contact your physician.

**RESTRICTIONS:**

- Do not drink alcoholic beverages the night after surgery as this may increase your risk of bleeding.
- If your surgery involved your lips or mouth, avoid hot liquids and foods for the first two to three hours after surgery. Eat soft foods for the first three days after surgery. Be careful when brushing your teeth and avoid placing the brush near the operative site.
- Do not smoke for at least two weeks after surgery for the best cosmetic result. Smoking has a destructive effect on wound healing and scars will be more visible

**RESTARTING BLOOD THINNERS:**

- If you stopped a blood thinner for surgery, please restart the day after surgery.

**DAILY WOUND CARE:**

- Always wash your hands with soap and water before your daily wound care.
- Gently remove your bandage 24 hours after surgery. Then change the dressing TWO times each day (and whenever it becomes wet) according to these instructions:
- Gently clean the area with cotton-tipped swabs dipped in warm soapy water or saline solution (you can make saline solution by adding one teaspoon of table salt to two cups of water).
- As you clean the area, remove all crusty material. If you cannot easily remove the crust, soak the area with wet gauze for 15 to 20 minutes. Do not let thick crusts or scabs form. Your wound will heal faster if you keep it clean and moist.
- After you have removed crusty material, pat the area dry with clean gauze or cotton-tipped swabs.
- Next, use a clean cotton swab to apply **AQUAPHOR™** ointment or petroleum jelly.
- Cover the area with nonstick pads (Telfa). Secure the dressing with tape.

**WHEN TO CONTACT YOUR PHYSICIAN:**

- Your wound continues to bleed after you have applied firm pressure for 20 minutes.
- Tylenol™ has not relieved your discomfort.
- Your wound becomes increasingly sore, tender, red or warm.
- Your surgery site rapidly swells.

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

- During Office Hours: 8:00 am - 5:00 pm Monday through Friday call 941-308-7546.
- After Hours: For immediate concerns, contact the on call provider at 941-308-7546.