

Please read the information below which will help you in your recovery from the surgery performed today.

HOW TO HANDLE THE DRESSING AND CARE FOR YOUR WOUND

- This dressing needs to be kept dry and on the wound for _____ days.**
- To avoid the risk of infection, remove the dressing after the specified period above. Then shower as normal and pat the area dry.
 - There may be a gauze dressing under the top dressing. If it sticks to the skin, wet it under the shower and gently ease it off.
 - There may be skin tape directly applied to your wound. This is allowed to get wet. Leave in place until you come back for removal of your sutures.

OR:

- This dressing needs to be kept dry until you return for a dressing change.**
- It is important to never leave a wet dressing on the wound. If the dressing gets damp or wet within the allocated period, it will need to be replaced. Please contact us or obtain another dressing from your local pharmacy.
 - If you have a bandage applied, leave it on for 24 hours unless otherwise instructed. After this period, the bandage but not the dressing may be removed.

WHAT TO DO AFTER YOUR PROCEDURE

- Go home and rest.
- If the lesion is on your face, do not bend over but rather squat down to reduce the risk of your wound bleeding. Avoid lifting anything heavy. Elevate your head on two or three pillows for 48 hours to reduce swelling and minimise bleeding.
- If the lesion is on your arm, keep the area elevated on a pillow for 48 hours.
- If the lesion is on your leg, keep the area elevated when sitting down.

HOW TO AID THE WOUND HEALING PROCESS

- Keep the dressing dry and intact. Remove it after the time specified above or return to us for your dressing change appointment. It is important to call us as soon as possible if you have any concerns.
- Daily showers will help your wound to heal faster. Shower as normal after the specified period above.
- Always clean the area with water only. Avoid using soaps / creams / liniments / antiseptics as these might cause wound breakdown and delay healing.
- Never leave a wet dressing on a wound. If the initial surface dressing gets wet. It must be changed. Dry dressings minimise the risk of infection.

WHAT TO DO IN CASE BLEEDING OCCURS

- Minor bleeding is normal for the first 24 to 48 hours after the procedure.
- If bleeding occurs, apply pressure for 20 minutes and keep the area elevated.
- In case of heavy or prolonged bleeding, please contact us. If this occurs out of hours, please go to the emergency department.
- Minor to moderate swelling or bruising is normal. In case of excessive swelling, please contact us.

HOW TO MANAGE SWELLING AND PAIN AFTER THE PROCEDURE

- Apply ice packs for two or three days, three times a day to reduce swelling and bleeding. Ice packs wrapped in a cloth should be applied for 10 minutes on, then 10 minutes off. Frozen peas also work well wrapped in a cloth.
- Take paracetamol for pain relief. Do not take any anti-inflammatories (e.g. ibuprofen) as these can increase bleeding.

HOW TO IDENTIFY A POSSIBLE INFECTION

- Contact us if you experience:
 - Increased pain, temperature and flu-like symptoms;
 - Widespread redness or offensive discharge from the wound.
- Avoid make-up, creams or antiseptic solutions until the wound is completely healed. These products may cause wound breakdown.

ACTIVITIES TO AVOID

- Avoid activities that could cause the wound to pull apart such as lifting, straining, contact sports, intense exercise.
- Avoid strenuous exercise as this may cause trauma to the area and increase likelihood of infection.
- Avoid swimming if you have stitches in place.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS, PLEASE CALL THE PRACTICE.

If you have had a surgical procedure on your skin, such as an excision or biopsy for a skin cancer or suspected skin cancer, there is a risk of scarring. All procedures leave scars, but proper aftercare can help optimise scarring results, reduce the appearance of scars, and help prevent keloid scars, which can be itchy and difficult to treat once formed.

WHAT CAUSES SCARRING?

Scars are a normal result of skin growth and repair after injury. The new skin has a different composition from the surrounding skin and therefore looks different. In the early stages after a procedure, the scar will be red or pink. This is normal and usually fades.

HOW TO IMPROVE SCARRING RESULTS

Follow the provided aftercare instructions to reduce the risk of wound infection and breakdown, which worsens scarring. The below tips can also help to optimise your post-procedure scarring results.

1 LED light therapy

You may wish to undergo a course of LED light therapy. This painless, comfortable treatment helps the wound heal significantly faster. Wounds treated with low-level light therapy are softer and more elastic when they heal and less likely to develop keloid scars. A recommended treatment course includes:

- 1-2 days before the procedure
- Immediately after the procedure
- 2-3 days after the procedure
- 2-3 days later

2 Avoid stretching the wound

For the first few weeks post-procedure, the wound is relatively weak and is at risk of pulling apart if the skin is stretched. Minimise movements that involve stretching the area for about a month after your stitches are removed. Be careful when lifting anything heavy or moving suddenly. Your skin may take up to a year to return to maximum strength.

3 Tape or tightly cover the wound

To flatten the wound and reduce stretching, you may apply surgical tape. For best results keep the wound covered with tape for 4-6 weeks. Tape over the wound can also help you be aware of stretching in the area.

4 Apply silicone gel

Silicone gel forms a film over the wound which stops it from drying out and applies pressure to stop the scar becoming raised. Wounds covered with silicone gel are less likely to develop into hypertrophic scars. You can apply a silicone gel twice daily. This can help keep the wound soft and flat and prevent discolouration. For best results, the wound can be treated twice daily for at least two months.

5 Massage

Massage can increase blood flow to the wound and promote wound healing. For best result, after 2 weeks (and only if the skin is clean and dry) massage daily with Bio-Oil for 10 minutes at a time, for up to 6 months. This reduces the risk of hypertrophic scarring and improves the softness and flexibility of the skin.

6 Avoid sun exposure

Sunburn may cause healing skin to become darker. Avoid unnecessary sun exposure to your wound for at least 6 months by applying sunscreen or covering the area with clothing.

WHAT NOT TO DO

1 **Do not smoke.** Smoking impairs wound healing.

2 **Do not use vitamin E cream.** Topical vitamin E may cause contact dermatitis.

3 **Do not use antiseptic.** Antiseptics are toxic to new healing skin.

HOW TO TREAT SCARS

If you have a pre-existing scar, treatments are available including fractional laser, steroid injections, microneedling, IPL, and low-level LED light therapy.

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