

Wound Care Following Surgery

General instructions:

- For the first 48 hours, only apply an ice bag to your surgical area for about 50% of the time while you are awake. Apply the ice bag about 10-20 minutes per hour on the hour. This should be placed adjacent to the dressing. If you do not have an ice bag, you can use a frozen bag of vegetables (peas or corn for example). Apply directly over the wound.
- If your surgical area is on the head, sleep with your head elevated. You should do this for the first 48 hours following your surgery. This helps to keep swelling down.
- If your surgical area is near the eye or forehead, you may experience a black eye and swelling around the eye. **Your eye may even swell shut.** This is normal, so if it happens, do not be frightened. The swelling will get worse the first 48 hours after procedure. After 48 hours the swelling will go down once you are up and around and recovered.
- Extra strength Tylenol is usually enough for post-operative discomfort, but the doctor may prescribe a narcotic. **Do not start taking aspirin or ibuprofen containing medications for 2 days after your surgery.**
- After 48 hours, you may get the wound wet in the shower, unless you had a skin graft. Do not soak your wound.
- Remove your dressing or bandage 48 hours following the procedure, unless you had a skin graft, in which case do **NOT** remove your bandage, but rather return to the clinic for its removal by our nurse in 1 week time.
- Minimize drinking alcohol for 7 days as this dilates the blood vessel, causing bleeding.
- **Avoid smoking** for 7-14 days as smoking impairs wound healing
- **No swimming or bathing** until the wound is healed. **Showering is okay.**
- **No heavy lifting or exercising** that may cause the wound to be stretched or placed under tension. This may cause the wound to separate.

Cleaning and putting a new dressing on your surgery site:

- After the first 48 hours, begin twice-a-day cleaning of the wound using **plain water with mild soap**. Gently remove any dried blood or excess crusting, and then rinse well. Do this until there is no fresh or dried blood.
- After cleaning, apply a coating of petrolatum/aquaphor. Keep ointment on the wound at all times until the wound is healed.
- Allow any scab to fall off on its own. Do not pick at scabs.
- Following your surgery, do not be surprised to see a small amount of blood tinged drainage. If your dressing becomes saturated with blood, remove the dressing. Use a clean gauze to apply gentle, but firm, pressure to the wound for 20 minutes. Do **NOT** periodically 'peek' at the wound, but rather hold this pressure constantly for 20 minutes. Repeat this procedure one more time if it is still bleeding.
- If this fails to stop the bleeding, call our office. If a large, swollen, purple area is noted around the surgery site that appears as if it may be full of blood (a hematoma), please call our clinic. If the bleeding stops, clean your surgery site and put a new dressing on it as instructed on this sheet.

CONTACT NUMBER:

Call our office at **949-552-1313** if the treated area becomes red, swollen, warm to the touch, painful, or has increased drainage. These are signs of infection and may require antibiotics for resolution.

If you are experiencing a complication **after hours**, please contact our on-call doctor at **714-564-2498**. However, if you are experiencing a life threatening emergency, **go to the Emergency Room nearest you.**