

Care of your incision after a dermatology procedure

How do I care for my sutured incision?

- Remove your gauze dressing in 24 hours unless told otherwise.
- It is ok to shower and wash with a mild soap once the dressing is off. Dove®, Cetaphil® or Purpose® do not have perfumes or dyes. Wash the area gently, *do not* rub or scrape the site. Use your fingertips to clean the area, a washcloth will irritate it. Pat the site dry.
- Put Aquaphor® or Vaseline® ointment on the area 4-5 times a day. You want to make sure the site is *always* moist. If you see the area is dry, apply the ointment. You do not want a scab to form. If a scab forms, continue to keep it moist but do not pick it. You should keep the area covered with a thin layer of ointment at all times until your next office visit. Once your sutures are removed, you will be told to apply ointment to the site for one more week.
- You do not need to cover the area with a gauze pad as long as the site is covered with ointment at all times. If your incision site is below the neck and clothes will touch the wound, you may put dry gauze over the ointment. In that case change the gauze pad every time you apply new ointment. You should clean the area 2-3 times a day with water, apply ointment and cover with gauze and paper tape.

When can I resume my usual activities?

Avoid exercise, bending, straining, swimming or lifting any heavy objects until your sutures are removed.

When do I have to come back to the office?

Return to have your sutures out in about _____ days.

Will I have pain or swelling after the procedure?

Most patients do not have a great deal of pain after the procedure. If you are uncomfortable, you should take Tylenol® (acetaminophen) and apply ice to the area for 10 minutes once an hour.

It is expected to have swelling around your eyes(s) or even a black eye after the procedure if you had surgery on the following areas: temple, forehead, eyebrow, nose or cheeks. To help with swelling around the eyes, put an icepack on the affected eye once an hour for 10 minutes.

Do I have to avoid alcohol or certain medicines after surgery?

Yes, you should avoid alcohol and the medicines below for 1 week after procedure as they may increase chance of bleeding:

- Ibuprofen (Motrin®, Advil®)
- Naproxen (Aleve®, Naprosyn®)
- Vitamin E
- Fish oil
- Products that have aspirin in them
- Aspirin - Unless your cardiologist or your primary doctor prescribes it as a daily medicine

When should I call my doctor?

Call your doctor if you have:

- Pain that gets worse a few days after the procedure
- A lot of swelling
- Bleeding which persists. If you have bleeding, apply firm pressure over the gauze pad for 20 minutes. If it doesn't stop after 20 minutes, apply pressure again for 20 minutes. If after 40 minutes, bleeding persists, call your doctor. It is normal to have some blood on your gauze pad after the procedure.
- A temperature above 100.5°F for 24 hours
- Redness, warmth, swelling, pus-like drainage at site.

How do I get in touch with my doctor?

- During normal business hours: Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. call our Nursing Phone Triage number at 215-728-4300 and specify that you need to speak with Robin Duvall, RN or Dr. Perlis.
- After normal business hours, call the operator at Fox Chase Cancer Center at 215-728-6900 and ask to speak with Dr. Perlis or Dr. Lessin.
- If you have a true emergency that cannot wait for a response, call 215-356-6942, which is Dr. Perlis' cell phone number.