

**WOUND CARE INSTRUCTIONS**  
**for**  
**WOUND on LOWER LEG**

**To reduce the risk of bleeding within the first 48 hours:**

- 1) No strenuous activities for 48 hours. This includes bending, lifting, brisk walking, and exercising. Mild activity such as walking may be resumed after 48 hours.
- 2) Do not exercise for 1 week. This includes running, weightlifting, biking, exercise classes (including yoga and pilates), elliptical, rowing, stretching, etc.
- 3) It is normal to have pain at your surgical site. Take only **Tylenol (acetaminophen)** and **Advil (ibuprofen)** for the relief of discomfort. You may take up to 2 Extra Strength Tylenol and 2 Advil (ibuprofen) at first and repeat every 8 hours. If you need pain relief between doses, you may take 2 Advil (ibuprofen). Begin taking pain medication approximately 2-3 hours after surgery. If you are already taking aspirin as recommended or prescribed by your doctor, you may continue this medication, but do not take any (additional) aspirin or Aleve for pain for 48 hours.
- 4) Do not exceed 3,000 mg of Tylenol (acetaminophen) or 2,400mg of Advil (ibuprofen) in a 24 hour period.
- 5) Do not drink any alcoholic beverages for 48 hour as alcohol can thin the blood.
- 6) Do **not smoke** for 2-3 weeks. Smoking depletes the blood of oxygen that promotes healing and could increase the risk of infection or a poor cosmetic result.
- 7) You may use ice to decrease the swelling of your surgical site. Be sure to cover the ice with a plastic bag and a towel to keep the bandage dry and to protect your skin. You may apply ice for 20 minutes and then take at least a 20 minute break before reapplying.

You should keep your leg elevated when at home. Avoid excessive walking for 2 days and rest when possible.

**Bleeding:**

A slight amount of oozing is normal at the wound site. However, if excessive bleeding occurs and your bandage gets saturated, you will need to stop the bleeding. You should be able to stop it by using a cloth and applying firm pressure directly on the bandage for 20 minutes. Do **NOT** remove the bandage we put in place, but you can place another layer of gauze and tape on top of it. If the bleeding does not stop, you should reapply pressure for another 20 minutes. If this does not stop the bleeding, you should call the doctor or go to your nearest hospital.

**Tomorrow night (36 hours):** Remove the Ace wrap/compression stocking.

**If wound is sutured:**

- 1) Remove and discard the white bulky bandage. You may use a cotton ball or gauze pad soaked with rubbing alcohol to loosen the adhesive at the corner of the bulky bandage. Leave the flat, clear, waterproof dressing on your skin until you return to our office in one week for a bandage change. You can shower and get the waterproof bandage wet, but be sure not to scrub over it or submerge the waterproof bandage in water (i.e., do not take baths).
- 2) Sleep without the Ace wrap/compression stocking tomorrow night and reapply the Ace wrap/compression stocking the next morning. You do not need to reapply the white bulky bandage. Begin wearing the Ace wrap/compression stocking just during the day (you will only need to sleep with the Ace wrap/compression stocking on **tonight**).

In the event that your flat bandage comes off, you will need a new bandage. Follow the instructions below for changing your bandage **daily**:

- 1) Remove wet dressing. As you will be changing the bandage daily, it is okay to shower and get the area wet- clean the sutures daily with tap water and soap. Pat dry.

- 2) Apply Vaseline to band-aid or non-stick gauze pad and paper tape and cover wound. Do NOT use Neosporin or antibiotic ointment. (Available at Brookville Pharmacy: 5454 Wisconsin Ave. Tel. 301-718-0900)
- 3) Repeat this daily until you come in or for a total of 2 weeks.
- 4) Wrap leg with Ace bandage/compression stocking during the day.

**If wound is grafted:**

- 1) Leave the bulky pressure bandage on your skin until you return to our office in one week for a bandage change.
- 2) You can shower and get the waterproof bandage wet, but be sure not to scrub over it or submerge the waterproof bandage in water (i.e., do not take baths).
- 3) Sleep without the Ace wrap/compression stocking tomorrow night and reapply the Ace wrap/compression stocking the next morning. Begin wearing the Ace wrap/compression stocking just during the day (you will only need to sleep with the Ace wrap/compression stocking on **tonight**).

**If wound is open:**

- 1) Remove the white bulky bandage and the flat dressing. As you will be changing the dressing daily, it is okay to shower and get the area wet.
- 2) Clean area daily with tap water and soap. Pat dry.
- 3) Apply Vaseline to band-aid or non-stick gauze pad and cover wound. Do NOT use Neosporin or antibiotic ointment. Paper tape can be used to secure non-stick gauze. (Available at most pharmacies or Brookville Pharmacy: 5454 Wisconsin Ave. Tel. 301-718-0900)
- 4) Repeat this daily until you come in or until the wound is healed- **do NOT let the wound form a scab!**
- 5) Sleep without the Ace wrap/compression stocking tomorrow night and reapply the Ace wrap/compression stocking the next morning. You do not need to reapply the white bulky bandage. Begin wearing the Ace wrap/compression stocking just during the day (you will only need to sleep with the Ace wrap/compression stocking on **tonight**).

**During the healing process you will notice some or all of the following:**

1. Swelling and/or discoloration and bruising around your surgical site are common.
2. You may experience a sensation of tightness as your wound heals. This is normal and will gradually subside.
3. Redness of the surgical site and surrounding tissue is normal.
4. Itching of the surgical site is common. Patients frequently experience itching after their wounds appear to have healed because of the continued healing under the skin. Plain Vaseline will help relieve itching.
5. You may experience sensitivity to temperature changes (such as cold air). This sensitivity improves with time, but if you are having a lot of discomfort, try to avoid extremes of temperatures.
6. **Expect wounds on the lower leg to take anywhere from 4-12 weeks to completely heal.**

**Signs of complications:**

\*If you have severe pain and/or swelling that is not controlled with Tylenol or Advil, it could indicate bleeding under the skin.

\*If you have pain that is getting worse each day instead of better, that could indicate another complication.

\*Severe itching with extensive redness could indicate infection or sensitivity to the ointment used to dress the wound or a reaction to the bandage tape.

**If you experience what you perceive to be a complication, call our office as soon as possible.**

**FOR QUESTIONS CALL:**

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