

# INTEGRATED DERMATOLOGY

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## OF TIDEWATER

**Below are additional instructions that may pertain to you depending on your surgical site**

### **Wound left open (granulation)**

- It may take a month or more for your wound to form a layer of skin. Skin begins to grow from the edges and the bottom of your wound.
- It is important to prevent a scab from forming, as this presents an obstacle to the migration of new skin cells. Keeping the area lubricated with Vaseline and covered helps prevent scab formation. If you develop a scab, soak the area for 15 minutes with clean water and mild soap and then pat dry with a clean towel. After wound is dry, apply Vaseline and a bandage.
- You may develop lumpiness and redness in the healed area after the skin forms. This is normal and is caused by immature collagen formation that will continue to improve as the scar matures. You can help this remodeling by massaging the area at night, but wait at least two months after the original surgery and once the skin is healed over.

### **Scalp**

- Try and keep your head elevated somewhat during sleep for the first few days to prevent bleeding.
- You may begin to shampoo your hair 2 days after your surgery, but avoid direct exposure of shampoo to the healing wound.
- If your wound is on hair-bearing skin, you may stop using a bandage after the initial pressure bandage is removed.
- It is important to keep un-bandaged wounds covered with Vaseline and protected from the sun. You may need to apply Vaseline several times daily in the absence of a bandage to prevent a scab.

### **Arm or Leg**

- You may have several days of swelling on wounds below the elbow or knee.
- Compression dressings and elevation will help to control swelling, pain and help with healing.
- Use Coban or an Ace wrap to apply pressure to the area, but do not wrap so tightly that the skin turns white, goes numb or feels cold. Please consult with your primary care physician before applying compression if you have a history of poor circulation to these areas.
- You may be given an antibiotic to prevent infection, please take them for the entire duration as prescribed.
- Any wound around a joint is subject to stress with mobility. This may delay healing, increase scarring and prolong swelling. Immobilize the wound as much as possible to help healing.

### **Ear**

- Deep wounds may affect cartilage causing extreme swelling and pain called chondritis that may mimic infection. When this happens, the entire ear can be affected. You may receive an antibiotic and/or Motrin (ibuprofen) to help prevent this if the probability is high. Contact your Doctor if the redness and swelling start increasing after the first two days from your surgery.
- Wounds on the ear are best cleaned with a dilute vinegar mixture. Mix one tablespoon of white vinegar with 2 cups clean water. Saturate a Q-tip, cotton ball or gauze into the mixture and use to clean your wound once daily for 2 weeks. Never re-use the applicator, after placing item of saturation to ear, obtain another clean item to saturate and continue this until completion.

### **Lip**

- Skin distortion, thickness and asymmetry are common in the beginning of healing because of the large muscle under the skin surrounding the lip. This is normal and will settle with time.
- Avoid using a straw for at least 1 week; this can increase bruising or pain.
- Avoid eating/drinking very warm foods/drinks for at least the first 24 hours.
- The lip may swell and bruise several times its size in the first day. Use cold compresses frequently.
- Numbness around the lip may last for several weeks, but eventually restores with time.

### **Skin Grafts**

- Skin grafts require extreme caution to prevent trauma to grafted area so that they develop attachment to the recipient wound.
- Please call the office if any active bleeding occurs. You may notice minimum drainage of pinkish or yellowish fluid around the wound edge. This is normal and to be expected.
- No exercise or physical activity that raises blood pressure for the first 48 hours.
- If present do not remove the sutured bandage until follow up, you may change the top bandage and clean around the sutured bandage and apply Vaseline then re-bandage.
- Please take all antibiotics as prescribed.
- When cleaning, use mild soap and water. Saturate a Q-tip with this mixture and gently wipe along the incision lines only and pat dry with clean cloth. Then apply Vaseline to the site and cover with bandage.
- Occasionally, the top layer of skin sloughs off the graft after several weeks and can be associated with an odor. This layer is not needed for successful graft acceptance.

### **All other surgical sites**

- To reduce swelling, place an ice pack on the area. Application of an ice pack should be alternated between 10-15 minutes of application and 10-15 minutes off for the first 24 hours.
- If the wound is on the face, sleep in an upright position for 48-72 hours after surgery. This can be done by sleeping in a recliner or elevated with extra pillows. Also avoid unnecessary straining, bending, or lifting in that time frame.
- Bandage may be removed \_\_\_\_\_ hours after procedure. To reduce trauma to the area, remove bandage in the shower.
- Wash the site with mild soap once daily after the bandage has been removed.
- Apply a thin layer of Vaseline to the wound. Vaseline should be applied to the sutured area only, in a thin almost invisible layer and cover with a bandage. This helps to keep the sutures moist so a scab or crust will not develop. If a scab happens to develop, gently wash with shampoo or mild soap, pat dry, and apply a thin layer of Vaseline.

### **Pain Management**

For pain, if permitted, you may use of 1000 mg of acetaminophen (two 500 mg tablets of Tylenol, or equivalent) with 800 mg of ibuprofen (four tablets of the 200 mg Motrin, or equivalent) as the initial dose. After 4 hours take 1 tablet of 500 mg (or equivalent) of acetaminophen. Four hours later after that you may switch to one 800 mg of ibuprofen (or equivalent) and continue alternating back and forth every 4 hours until pain is relieved.

Precautions: Only follow the pain relieving medication protocol listed above if it does not interfere with your medical conditions or instructions/ contraindications from your other medical providers.

Do not use more than 3-4 tablets of 800 mg of ibuprofen or 6-8 tablets of 500 mg of acetaminophen in a 24 hour time period.

### **Scarring**

Once surgical site(s) is/are completely healed you may use silicone sheeting/gel based band aids, if desired, to minimize scarring. Also avoid direct exposure to sun light without sun protection.

- Date of scheduled suture removal /follow up \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_.

With Dr. \_\_\_\_\_

Look for signs of infection, redness, extreme tenderness, oozing, bleeding, or separation of the sutures. If there is any sign of a complication please call our office during business hours at 757-461-1033 or during after-hours our on-call Physician at 270-9254.