



PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Caring for Your Wound After Your Skin Procedure with a Topical Skin Adhesive

This information explains how to care for your wound after your skin procedure with a topical skin adhesive.

Topical skin adhesive is a medical glue used to close surgical incisions (cuts). It helps protect your wound from infection and needs little aftercare.

If you've had a procedure to remove a skin lesion, caring for your wound is an important part of your recovery. It can help prevent infection and help your wound heal with less pain or discomfort.

Caring for your wound at home

- Keep the bandage on your wound for 48 hours (2 days) after your procedure. Keep it clean and dry.
- If your healthcare provider told you to use ice, place an ice pack on your wound over your bandage for _____ minutes every hour while you're awake. Do this during the first 24 to 48 hours (1 to 2 days) after your procedure. This will help reduce bleeding, pain, and swelling.
- You should take off your bandage and shower 48 hours after your procedure.
 - Let the water run gently over your wound. Do not scrub it.
 - Pat your wound dry with a clean gauze pad or a clean, dry washcloth.
- Do not put any type of ointment on the skin adhesive.

- Do not take a bath, swim, or use a hot tub until 2 weeks after your procedure.
- The skin adhesive acts as a water-resistant bandage. You do not need to put another bandage over it.
- The skin adhesive will peel off on its own within 14 days. If it's still there after 14 days, you can use petroleum jelly to help take it off.

Managing pain after your procedure

You may have pain or discomfort after your procedure. To help with this:

- Take acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or extra-strength acetaminophen (Extra Strength Tylenol®). Follow the dose directions on the package. If this dose doesn't help with your pain, call your healthcare provider's office.
 - You may be allergic to acetaminophen or can't take it because of a health problem. If so, ask your healthcare provider what you can take instead.
- Take aspirin or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as ibuprofen (Advil®) or naproxen (Aleve®) if your healthcare provider says you can.
 - If you're in a cancer treatment clinical trial, ask your oncologist (cancer doctor) which pain medicine you can take.
- You can also use an ice pack to reduce pain, swelling, and bruising. If your healthcare provider told you how long and how often to use ice, follow their instructions. If they did not, place the ice pack on your wound for 15 to 20 minutes every hour.

Bleeding, bruising, and swelling after your procedure

You may have swelling and bruising after your procedure. This often gets better after 7 to 14 days.

If your wound bleeds:

- Press firmly on your wound with a clean gauze pad for 30 minutes.
 - **If your wound is above your neck:** Sit down, keep pressure on the wound, and raise your head slightly with pillows.
 - **If your wound is on your arm or leg:** Keep pressure on the wound and raise your arm or leg above the level of your chest.

If the bleeding does not stop after 30 minutes, call your healthcare provider. After hours or weekends, you'll be connected with the after-hours triage team.

Activities

- Do not do strenuous exercise for 2 weeks. Strenuous exercise is exercise that takes lots of effort, such as running or heavy lifting.
- Ask your healthcare provider when you can lift objects heavier than 5 pounds (2.3 kilograms). You may be able to do this right away after your procedure, or you may need to wait.
- Talk with your healthcare provider before going to the gym or doing activities such as running, jogging, or lifting weights.
- If your procedure was on your neck, face, back, or scalp, avoid bending at your waist for 1 to 2 weeks.
- Do not let your wound stay underwater for 2 weeks and it's fully healed. This includes being in a swimming pool, bathtub, or hot tub.

Sleeping

If your procedure was:

- **Above your neck:** Sleep with your head raised on 2 pillows for the first 2 days after your procedure.
- **On your arm or leg:** Raise that arm or leg on 2 pillows so it stays above the level of your heart while you sleep. Do this for the first 2 days after your procedure.

Ask your healthcare provider if you should avoid lying on your wound or putting pressure on it for the first 48 hours. These steps can help reduce irritation and bleeding.

Healing

Your wound may stay pink or red for up to 1 year after your procedure. For some people, the color change may last longer.

After your wound heals, use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher on the area. This will help protect your scar from the sun.

When to call your healthcare provider

Call your healthcare provider if you have:

- A fever of 100.4° F (38 ° C) or higher
- Chills (feeling cold and shivering)
- Redness, bruising, or swelling that you're concerned about
- Pain or discomfort that gets worse
- Skin around the wound that feels hard, warm, or hot
- Bright yellow or green discharge
- Bleeding does not stop after 30 minutes of firm pressure
- Bad odor (smell) coming from your wound
- A wound that opens
- A rash or blisters
- Drainage that soaks through your bandage
- Any questions or unexpected problems

If you have questions or concerns, call your healthcare provider. You can reach them Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. After 5 p.m., call the main hospital at 212-639-2000.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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