



PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Caring for Your Wound after Your Skin Procedure Without Sutures

This information explains how to care for your wound after your skin procedure without sutures (stitches).

You had a procedure to remove a concerning lesion on your skin. Caring for your wound after your procedure is important to help prevent infection and help you heal with little pain or discomfort.

Caring for Your Wound at Home

- Leave the bandage on your wound for _____ hours after your procedure. Keep it clean and dry.
- If your doctor or nurse told you to ice your wound, you can put an ice pack on your wound for _____ minutes every hour you're awake, or as instructed by your healthcare provider. You can do this during the first 24 to 48 hours after your procedure. This will help reduce bleeding, pain, and swelling.
- You can shower _____ hours after your procedure.
 - Let the shower stream run gently over your wound.
 - Pat your wound dry with a clean gauze pad or clean, dry washcloth.
 - Don't take a bath, go swimming, or go into a hot tub until your wound is healed.

Cleaning your wound

Clean your wound every day. Do this for _____ days/weeks after your procedure, or until your follow-up appointment. Follow the instructions below when you clean your wound.

Supplies

You will need the following supplies to clean your wound:

- One package of cotton swabs (Q-tips®)
- One package of nonstick gauze pads
- _____ solution
- _____ ointment
- Adhesive bandage (Band-aid®) cut to fit the wound size
- Paper tape
- Clean gauze pad or clean dry wash cloth

Instructions for cleaning your wound

1. Gather your supplies.
2. Wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
3. Clean your wound with _____ solution.
4. Gently pat your wound dry with a clean gauze pad or clean, dry washcloth. Don't rub the area.
5. Use cotton swabs to put _____ ointment on your wound.
6. Cover your wound with nonstick gauze or an adhesive bandage (Band-aid) cut to the size of your wound. If you use nonstick gauze, keep it in place with paper tape.
7. When you're done, wash your hands with warm water and soap or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

Follow these instructions for _____ days/weeks or until your wound is healed.

Additional instructions:

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®).
- Don't take aspirin or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as ibuprofen (Advil®) or naproxen (Aleve®). These medications make it harder for your blood to clot, which may increase bleeding.
- Follow the dose directions on the package. If this dose doesn't help with your pain, call your doctor's office.
- If you're allergic to acetaminophen or if you can't take it due to a medical condition, ask your healthcare provider what you can take instead.
- If you're in a cancer treatment clinical trial, ask your oncologist (cancer doctor) about what pain medications you can take.
- You can also hold an ice pack over your wound to reduce pain, swelling, and bruising. Put an ice pack on your wound for 15 to 20 minutes every hour or as directed by your healthcare provider.

Bleeding and Bruising After Your Procedure

- You may have swelling and bruising after your procedure. This usually goes away after many days.
- If you have any bleeding, press firmly on your wound with a clean gauze pad for _____ minutes. If the bleeding doesn't stop, repeat this step. If the bleeding still hasn't stopped after repeating this step, call your doctor's office.

Activities

- Don't let your wound be underwater (such as in a swimming pool, bathtub, or hot tub) for _____ days/weeks.

Healing Process

- After some time, a scab may form on your wound. If a scab forms, don't remove it. It will fall off on its own. Continue to put Aquaphor® or Vaseline® on the wound until it's healed.
- You may notice a thin, pale yellow film on your wound. It may also have a narrow border (less than ¼ of an inch) of pink around it. This is normal.
- You may have discoloration (pinkness or redness) at the site of your wound for up to 1 year after your procedure. Some people may have it for even longer.
- Once your wound has healed, put a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30 on the area. This will help protect it from sun exposure

When to Call Your Healthcare Provider:

Call your healthcare provider if you have any of the following:

- A fever of 100.4° F (38 ° C) or higher
- Chills (feeling cold and shivering)
- Any of the following symptoms at your wound or the area around it:
 - Increasing redness or swelling, such as a pink border wider than ¼ of an inch
 - Increasing pain or discomfort
 - Skin that's hard, warm or hot to the touch
 - Bright yellow or green drainage
 - Bad odor (smell)
 - Rash
 - Blistering

- Drainage that goes through your bandage
- Bleeding that doesn't stop after putting pressure on the area for 30 minutes
- Any questions or unexpected problems

If you have any questions or concerns, talk with a member of your healthcare team. You can reach them Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM at _____. After 5:00 PM, during the weekend, and on holidays, please call _____. If there's no number listed, or you're not sure, call 212-639-2000.

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

Caring for Your Wound after Your Skin Procedure Without Sutures - Last updated on December 20, 2019

©2019 Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center