Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Caring for Your Wound After Your Excision in the Gastric Mixed Tumor Service

This resource will help you care for your wound after your excision in the Gastric Mixed Tumor Service.

You had a procedure to remove a suspicious area of skin or tissue. This procedure is called an excision.

Your wound was closed with sutures (stitches). Caring for your wound is important to help prevent infection and help it heal. Your nurse will review these instructions with you before you go home.

Caring for your wound

You can remove your bandage 24 to 48 hours (1 to 2 days) after your procedure. You may see blood on the bandage. This is normal.

Your wound may look different than the skin around it. This is normal and will get better with time. It may also feel tender. While it's healing, your wound may look red, black, or bruised.

Your wound site may be covered with Steri-Strips™ (thin strips of paper tape) or Dermabond® (surgical glue).

- If your wound is covered with Steri-Strips, leave them on until they fall off on their own. If the strips haven't come off after 10 days, you may gently remove them.
- If your wound is covered with Dermabond, don't remove the glue. It will peel off on its own. If the Dermabond hasn't come off after 10 days, you can remove it using soap, water and a washcloth. Rub the wet washcloth over the area very gently until it comes off.

You may notice pink liquid oozing from your wound a few hours after your procedure. This is common and not a problem. To help with this, apply gentle pressure on the site for 5 minutes. If the bandage is soaked, replace it with a dry bandage and call your healthcare provider.

Showering

You can shower 24 to 48 hours after your procedure. Follow your healthcare provider's instructions. You should remove your bandage before showering. You do not need sterility or sterile gloves to care for your wound at this time.

You can let the shower water run over your wound, but don't let it soak in water. Clean your wound with soap and water and pat it dry with a clean towel. You don't need to put another bandage on your wound after you shower.

Your healthcare provider may tell you to put on new bandages. If they do, use gloves or wash your hands with soap and water before putting the new bandages on.

Unless your healthcare provider tells you differently, don't:

- Put any creams, ointments, or lotions on your wound.
- Cover your wound with a bandage, unless your clothes irritate it.

Sutures

Some sutures don't need to be removed because your body will absorb them. These are called dissolved sutures. Sutures that can't be absorbed by your body will be removed by your healthcare provider after your site has healed. Your nurse will let you know which type of sutures you have.

Suture removal

- **For non-dissolvable sutures**: You will go back to your healthcare provider's office to have your sutures removed in a couple days or weeks. Call your healthcare provider to make an appointment if you don't already have one.
- **For dissolvable sutures**: Continue to check your sutures until they're dissolved, which may take up to 1 to 2 months. You may see a small string at the end of your wound. This is probably from your sutures which may not have dissolved yet. If you have any concerns, call your healthcare provider's office.

Pain

You may have pain after your procedure. To help with this, take over-the-counter medicine such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Advil®). An over-the-counter medicine is one you can buy without a prescription. Your healthcare provider may tell you to put an ice pack on the affected area to help with any pain.

If you're prescribed pain medicine, follow your healthcare provider's instructions.

Activities

You can resume most activities right after your procedure. Don't perform any of the following activities until your healthcare provider says it's safe:

- Don't lift objects heavier than 5 pounds (2.3 kilograms).
- Strenuous exercises such as running, jogging, and lifting weights. Your healthcare provider will give you instructions on what exercises and movements you can do while your wound is healing.

Sleeping

If your wound is above your neck, sleep with your head raised 45 degrees for the first 10 days after your procedure. You can do this by sleeping with 2 pillows under your head.

Scarring

You may have discoloration (pinkness or redness) at the site of your wound for up to 1 year after your surgery. Once your wound is healed, apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30 to the area if you're out in the sun. This will protect it from scarring.

When to call your healthcare provider

Call your healthcare provider if:

- You have yellowish drainage from your wound.
- You have a fever higher than 100.4 °F (38 °C).
- There is an area of redness or swelling bigger than ¼ inch around your wound.
- You feel increased pain or discomfort around your wound.
- The skin around your wound feels hard or hot to the touch.
- You have chills (shivering).
- You notice a bad smell (odor) at your wound or the area around it.
- The wound looks like it has opened.

Using MSK MyChart

MSK MyChart (mskmychart.mskcc.org) is your MSK patient portal account. You can use MSK MyChart to send and receive messages from your healthcare team, view your test results, see your appointment dates and times, and more.

If you don't already have a MSK MyChart account, you can sign up by going to my.mskcc.org. You can also contact the MSK MyChart Help Desk by calling 646-227-2593.

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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