

## Post-Operative Wound Care Instructions

1. Leave the bandage in place until bedtime or the next morning. Then, rinse the wound gently with water for several minutes; or, allow soapy water to rinse over the wound in a shower. Apply a generous amount of Vaseline, Aquaphor, CeraVe Healing Ointment, or antibiotic ointment (Bacitracin, Polysporin, or Neosporin) to the wound and cover with a Band-Aid or a non-stick pad and paper tape. Repeat this twice a day for 7 to 10 days or until the wound is healed.
2. Many patients will have one episode of bleeding within 24 hours of surgery. If bleeding occurs after surgery, apply firm continuous pressure for at least 15 minutes before checking to see if the wound has stopped bleeding. If the wound continues to bleed, repeat the above procedure for an additional 15 minutes. If bleeding continues after this time, call the clinic or go to the Emergency Room while maintaining firm pressure on the wound.
3. If crusting occurs on the wound, soak the area with hydrogen peroxide (over-the-counter) and very gently remove the crusts. Scabs or crusts indicate that the wound has not been kept sufficiently moist with ointment and is drying out.  
*It is an old wives tale that a wound heals better when exposed to the air. Scabs are not good for a wound. If a wound is kept covered with Vaseline and a bandage, it will heal faster and with a better cosmetic result.*
4. Avoid soaking the wound in water (baths, hot tubs, swimming). You may shower as usual and let water and soap run over the area.
5. Use Tylenol (acetaminophen), Advil (ibuprofen), or Alleve (naproxen) for pain, if needed. Avoid aspirin for 1-2 days after surgery, if possible. If you have severe pain, please call the office for stronger pain medicine.
6. If you smoke, it is important to refrain from smoking for at least 2 weeks after surgery. (Now is a great time to stop smoking altogether!) In the very least, try to cut back on the number of cigarettes each day (although this is not optimal). Smoking limits the amount of oxygen to the wound. It impairs healing and increases the risk for infection and bleeding. You will have a much better scar and result from surgery if you avoid smoking altogether. Second-hand smoke also impairs healing, so avoid exposure to others who are smoking.
7. For optimal cosmetic results, avoid direct sunlight (or tanning beds) to the area for 4 months after surgery. Sunlight can impair wound healing and make the scar more red and noticeable.
8. Avoid any strenuous activities which may affect the surgical site until the sutures are removed. This could pull open the sutures or damage the wound. For instance, no heavy chewing of food if surgery done on lips or cheek. No heavy lifting or aerobics with the arm if surgery done in that area. No jogging or exercise if surgery was performed on the legs or feet.
9. If the wound reopens or if it becomes extremely red, swollen, painful, or if it begins to drain large amounts of pus, call the office immediately. Normal healing wounds will be slightly red and will have clear yellow or slightly bloody drainage.
10. After the wound is healed (2 weeks later), you will have a pink scar that may take up to a year to lighten. To improve the appearance of the scar, we recommend applying Bio-Oil twice daily to the area for several weeks to months. It is available in our office and at drugstores.