Wound Care After Skin Surgery

Wound care is done to clean the wound, prevent infection and prevent a scab from forming. Follow these instructions to help your wound to heal better.

When to do the Wound Care

- Keep the original dressing in place for 48 hours after your surgery.
- After the original dressing is removed, do wound care as directed.
- Stop the wound care when your skin has healed over or the stitches have dissolved or the staples have been removed.

Supplies (use items checked)

- Tape
- White petroleum jelly (Aquaphor or Vaseline)
- Prescription Bactroban ointment (Mupirocin 2%)
- Prescription antibiotic eye ointment
- Band-Aid or non-adherent gauze dressing (Telfa)
- Cotton tip applicators (Q-tips)
- Gauze
Care of the Wound

1. Wash your hands with soap and water.
2. Gently remove the old dressing. If the dressing is stuck, wet the dressing with tap water, wait 3 to 5 minutes and then remove the dressing, or remove the old dressing in the bath or shower.
3. Clean the wound. Allow soap, water, and/or shampoo to wash over wound, and then rinse the wound with tap water.
4. Dry the wound with a clean Q-tip, cotton ball or gauze pad.
5. Use a clean Q-tip to put a thick layer of ointment or Vaseline over the wound.
6. Cover the wound with a band-aid or a non-stick pad. Before placing the non-stick pad over the wound, cut the pad with clean scissors so it will cover the wound.
7. Use tape to secure the pad over the wound.

Wound Bleeding

To prevent bleeding, do not drink alcohol, and do not take aspirin or products with aspirin. Check with your doctor about using any aspirin or medicines that contain aspirin while your wound is healing. These drugs may increase the chance of bleeding.

If there is a large amount of bleeding, follow these steps:

1. Put firm pressure over the wound for 20 minutes.
2. If the bleeding stops after you hold pressure on the wound, do not remove the dressing. Keep the original dressing in place. Put a small piece of clean dry gauze over the dressing to help support the dressing.
3. If the bleeding does not stop after applying pressure, put firm pressure over the wound again for another 20 minutes.
4. If the bleeding does not stop, keep holding pressure on the wound and call your dermatologist or go to your local emergency room.
Pain
You may take Tylenol (acetaminophen) or extra-strength Tylenol every 4 to 6 hours as needed for pain and discomfort. Follow the directions on the package. If you are not able to take Tylenol, ask your doctor what medicine to take for pain.

What to Expect After Surgery
• A slight pink or brown colored fluid leaking from your wound. This may show on the dressing
• Mild pain
• Mild tenderness at the wound site, like a bruise
• Mild color changes to the skin, like a bruise
• A black eye can appear with surgery to the face
• Eyelids may swell with surgery to the face

Once your wound has completely healed, you may massage the wound area two times a day for about 1 minute each time. This will help the scar to soften.

When to call the doctor
Call your doctor if you have any of the following:
• Pain gets worse or not relieved by your pain medicine
• Increased redness
• Swelling
• Pus-like drainage from the wound
• Fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) or higher.
• Bleeding that does not stop after holding firm pressure for 20 minutes
How to reach the OSU Dermatology Department

- Call The OSU Dermatology Department at (614) 293-0404 for problems Monday through Friday during normal business hours.

- For urgent problems in the evenings or after hours, call the hospital operator at (614) 293-8000 and ask for the Dermatologist on call.

- If you have not received a report of your skin biopsy either by mail or by phone within 3 weeks after your biopsy, call the dermatology office at (614) 293-0404.