



MOHS SURGERY: POST-OPERATIVE WOUND CARE INSTRUCTIONS

You have had a skin lesion removed and the defect closed with sutures.

- 1) You will go home with a bulky dressing, which applies pressure to the wound to prevent bleeding. Keep this in place and keep it dry for 24 hours.
- 2) Wounds heal better and hurt less if there is less swelling, To reduce swelling during the first 24-48 hours:
 - a. Keep the surgical area elevated to allow drainage of tissue fluid towards the heart. For example, if the defect is on your head, sleep with your head elevated on pillows. If on your arm or leg, sleep with this area propped up on a pillow.
 - b. Use a cool compress around the bulky dressing for 15 minutes out of every hour while awake. You may use frozen peas or crushed ice in a plastic bag. If the area is on your face, you may need a cool compress to cover your eye or lip area as well. Place a thin towel over the dressing and apply a ice pack. If an area feels too cold prior to the 15 minutes, take off the ice for a few minutes.
- 3) When you change the dressing after 24 hours, get in the shower and allow it to get wet; this helps you gently remove the tape.
- 4) After removing the pressure dressing, clean the wound twice a day by soaking with a washcloth moistened with tepid water for 10-15 minutes.
- 5) After soaking, remove any crust from around the sutures with a clean Q-tip.
- 6) Apply an ointment such as Aquaphor or Vaseline. Cover with a dressing. Depending on the size of the area, use either a bandage or a non-adhesive Telfa dressing and hypoallergenic tape.
- 7) Repeat steps 3-6 until you return for suture removal.
- 8) Please refrain from strenuous exercise, bending, straining, stooping or lifting heavy objects for a minimum of 48 hours. These activities can cause bleeding.
- 9) For the pain, take only Tylenol or the pain medications prescribed for you. Do not take Aspirin, Advil, Nuprin, Mortin, etc. This is very important because these medications may cause bleeding.
- 10) If the area bleeds, apply pressure over the dressing for 15 minutes by the clock (i.e., don't keep peeking!) If the area continues to bleed, take off the dressing, use gauze to apply direct pressure to the bleeding site for another continuous 15 minutes. This will stop most bleeding, but if it does not, please call us, night or day.



11) Please call if you note increasing tenderness, redness, yellow or green drainage, swelling, purple discoloration or fever.