Heatley Medical
& Skin Care Centre
4 Tyler St, Heatley, Qld 4814 | 07 4729 5000

PATIENT HANDOUT

Surgery Aftercare

Please read the information below which will help you in your recovery from the surgery performed by your doctor today.

How to handle the dressing and care for the wound

☐ **This dressing needs to be kept dry and on the wound for _____ days.**

- To avoid the risk of infection, remove the dressing after the specified period above. Then shower as normal and pat the area dry.
- There may be a gauze dressing under the top dressing. If it sticks to the skin, wet it under the shower and gently ease it off.
- There may be skin tape directly applied to your wound. This is allowed to get wet. Leave it in place until you come back for removal of your sutures.

OR

☐ **This dressing needs to be kept dry until you return for a dressing change appointment.**

- It is IMPORTANT to never leave a wet dressing on the wound. If the dressing gets damp or wet within the allocated period, it will need to be replaced. Please contact us or obtain another dressing from your local pharmacy.
- If you have a bandage applied, leave it on for 24 hours, unless otherwise instructed. After this period, the bandage but not the dressing may be removed.

What to do after the procedure

- Go home and rest.
- If the lesion is on your face, do not bend over; squat down instead to reduce the risk of your wound bleeding.
- Avoid lifting anything heavy.
- Elevate your head on two or three pillows for 48 hours to reduce swelling and minimise bleeding.
- If the lesion is on your arm, keep the area elevated on a pillow for 48 hours.
- If the lesion is on your leg, keep the area elevated when sitting down.

How to aid the wound healing process

- Keep the dressing dry and intact. Remove it after three days or return to us for your dressing change appointment. It is important to call us as soon as possible if you have any concerns.
- Daily showers will help your wound to heal faster. Shower as normal after the specified period above.

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- Always clean the area with water only. Avoid using soaps, creams, liniments or antiseptics (e.g. Betadine, Savlon, Dettol, papaw ointment) as these might cause wound breakdown and delay healing.

IMPORTANT: Never leave a wet dressing on a wound. If the initial surface dressing gets wet, it must be changed. Dry dressings minimise the risk of infection.

What to do in case bleeding occurs

- Minor bleeding is normal for the first 24 to 48 hours after the procedure.
- If bleeding occurs, apply pressure for 20 minutes and keep the area elevated.
- In case of heavy or prolonged bleeding, please contact us. If this occurs out of hours, please contact the local after-hours general practice or hospital.
- Minor to moderate swelling or bruising is normal. In case of excessive swelling, please contact us.

How to manage swelling and pain after the procedure

- Apply ice packs for two or three days, three times a day to reduce swelling and bleeding. Ice packs wrapped in a cloth should be applied for 10 minutes on, then 10 minutes off. Frozen peas also work well wrapped in a cloth.
- Take Panadol or Panadeine for pain relief. Do not take Aspirin or any anti-inflammatories (e.g. Nurofen, Advil) as these can increase bleeding.

How to identify a potential infection

- Contact the skin cancer centre if you experience:
- Increased pain, temperature and flu-like symptoms;
- Widespread redness or offensive discharge from the wound.
- Avoid make-up, creams or antiseptic solutions until the wound is completely healed. These products may cause wound breakdown.

What activities should you avoid?

- Avoid activities that could cause the wound to pull apart such as lifting, straining, contact sports or intense exercise.
- Avoid strenuous exercise as this may cause trauma to the area and increase the likelihood of infection.
- Avoid swimming if you have stitches in place.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the clinic.