Wound Care

Leave the bandage on for 48 hours after the procedure. Keep the dressing clean and dry until then. If the dressing comes off sooner, replace it with a new dressing or a Band-Aid®.

After 48 Hours
Remove the dressing and clean the wound. Clean the wound daily until healed or stitches are removed.
To clean and care for the wound:

1. Wash your hands.
2. Carefully wash the area with a gentle, fragrance-free soap. Rinse well.
3. Let area air dry or gently pat dry.
4. Any crust will slowly come off as you clean daily. **Do not force crust off.**
5. Apply Vaseline® to the wound after cleaning.
6. Cover with Band-Aid® or other dressing. If the Band-Aid® is irritating your skin, try putting the Band-Aid® in different directions. You could also make a dressing with a small, nonstick pad held in place by paper tape. You may apply over-the-counter hydrocortisone cream to irritated skin. **Do not put on biopsy or surgical site.**

Avoid

- Swimming, hot tubs, soaking the wound in a bath (a gentle shower is okay).
- Too much stretching or exercising of areas in or close to the wound.
- Exposing wound to dust or dirt.

Bleeding
Some wounds bleed or ooze during the first 24 hours. Bleeding may be worse if you are taking a blood thinner.

If the wound does bleed and you see blood soaking through the bandage, **do not** remove the bandage. Tips to stop the bleeding:

- Cover the bandage with a clean gauze pad and apply constant firm pressure for at least 20 minutes, without letting up.
- Raise the wound site using a pillow or sitting position if the lesion is on the head.
- Apply an ice pack or cold compresses over the covered wound dressing.

If bleeding does not stop after 20 minutes of constant pressure, call the clinic. If clinic is closed, go to the closest emergency room.

Normal Changes

- Redness and swelling around the wound site the first few days, this will get better over time.
- Tenderness is normal during the first days but should also get better with time.
- Clear or light-yellow drainage.

Signs of Infection

- Spreading of redness and/or swelling at surgical site 1 to 2 days after the procedure.
- It is more tender after 1 to 2 days.
- Fever (greater than 100.4°F) with 2 readings, 4 hours apart.
- Increased warmth at the site.
- Green or yellow discharge.

Pain
Mild pain is normal after the procedure. Please take Tylenol® and/or ibuprofen per package directions.

Stitches and Scars
Stitches can sometimes come out or the wound edges can come apart before stitches are removed. If that happens, continue wound care as before. The wound will heal on its own. **No** new stitches will be placed.

You will have a scar at the wound site. Some scars may thicken, and others may take several months to flatten out. Most scars will improve over time but may take several months.

Tips for the First 1 to 2 Days
If your wound is on your face, head or neck:

- Sleep with your head up on 2 pillows, so you will have less swelling.
- **Avoid** bending with your head below your heart.

If your wound is on your arm or leg:

- Keep your arm or leg raised as much as you can.
- Use ace or elastic wraps to decrease swelling and support the areas during activity.

Who to Call
If you have questions, please contact your provider through MyChart or call your provider listed in your After Visit Summary or After Hospital Care Plan. For a list of UW Health Clinics, visit http://www.uwhealth.org/.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 10/2025. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#7604