

Wound Care for Exposed Cartilage or Bone

Leave the bandage on for 48 hours after the procedure. Keep the dressing clean and dry until then. It may take 3 weeks or more for your body to form a new cover.

After 48 Hours

- Clean the wound bed with tap water 1-2 times a week or as directed by your provider. **Do not** use soap as it can dry the wound.
- Every day clean any drainage on the skin **around** the wound with water and a soft cloth.
- Apply a large amount of Vaseline to the wound every day. Cover with an occlusive Band-Aid® or Telfa™. **Do not** use gauze.
- Keep the wound covered when showering. **Do not** use blow dryers around the wound.

Gelfoam® may have been put on your wound to stop bleeding. It may come off as the wound is being cleaned. **Do not** force it off. If it remains on the wound, it will dissolve over time.

Bleeding

- Apply direct pressure by pressing firmly over the site for 10 minutes (timed by the clock). If bleeding has not stopped, use pressure for 10 more minutes (timed by the clock).
- **If bleeding still has not stopped, call the clinic where you were seen or go to your local emergency room.**
- Reinforce, but do not remove the soiled bandage unless told to do so. You could disturb the clot.

Swelling and Bruising

This is normal but goes away in 2-3 weeks.

- Sleep with your head raised on 2 pillows to reduce swelling.
- If wound is on the ear, try not to sleep on that side.
- Avoid bending with your head below heart level.

If told to apply ice or cold compress to reduce swelling:

- **Do not** apply ice right on the skin. Ice should be placed in a plastic bag then wrapped in a towel and applied to the bandaged wound.
- Ice should be kept on for only 15 minutes at a time.

Activities

- **No** heavy activity for 1 week or as instructed.
- **No** swimming, hot tubs, soaking the wound in a bath.
- **No** lifting more than 10 pounds for 1-2 weeks or as directed.
- Avoid exposing wound to dust or dirt.

Signs of Infection

Call the clinic if you have any:

- Increased pain or swelling of the wound.
- Pus or smelly drainage.
- Fever greater than 101°F.
- Increased warmth at the site.
- Redness spreading out from the wound.

Pain

Unless your doctor tells you otherwise, you may take both Tylenol® or ibuprofen to help control your pain. We recommend:

- Tylenol® 1000mg every 6-8 hours
- Ibuprofen 600mg every 6 hours

You may take them together every 6-8 hours or taking one type alone and then the other type 3-4 hours later. Repeat this pattern, alternate medicines every 3-4 hours.

If prescribed a narcotic pain medicine, do not drink or drive while you are taking it.

It is best to take narcotics with food to prevent nausea/vomiting. They may also cause constipation. You may use over the counter stool softeners as needed. Limit use of over-the-counter Tylenol® (acetaminophen) if you are given a prescription that has acetaminophen in it.

Scarring

All wounds cause some scarring. Time improves most scars. Cover-up make up may be used after the wound has healed. Sunscreen should be used on scars after healing. Some people may develop very thick scars, or keloids, which may need extra medical care. Call our office if this occurs and we will schedule a follow up visit.

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

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 © 4/2025 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority, All Rights Reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#6610