

Wound Care

Your wound site will be red, tender and swollen for the first days. **That is normal!** It is also normal to see some clear, lightly yellow drainage as well as crusting within the first days.

Leave 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. After 48 hours clean the wound daily until healed or sutures are removed. Follow the steps below to clean and care for the wound.

1. Wash your hands.
2. Carefully wash the area with a gentle, unscented soap. Rinse well. Let area air dry or gently pat dry. The crust, if there is any, will slowly come off as you clean daily; **do not force crust off.**
3. Apply Vaseline to the wound after cleaning.
4. 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)
- Excessive stretching or exercising of areas involving or close to the wound
- Exposing wound to dust or dirt without a bandage

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. Follow the tips below to stop the bleeding.

- Cover the bandage with a clean gauze pad and apply constant 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 during working hours, 8-5 or go the emergency room if clinic is closed.

Normal Changes

- Redness and swelling around the procedure site during the first few days that improves over time.
- Tenderness is normal during the first days, but should also improve with time.
- Clear or light yellow drainage is normal.

Signs of Infection

Wound infection is uncommon during the first 1-2 days. Watch for these symptoms:

- Spreading of redness and/or swelling at surgical site 1-2 days after the procedure
- It is more tender after 1-2 days

- Fever (greater than 100.4°F) with 2 readings, 4 hours apart
- Increased warmth at the site
- Green or yellow discharge

Pain

Mild tenderness is normal, especially with activity. You may take Tylenol® every 4-6 hours as needed. Do not take aspirin or ibuprofen products for 72 hours after the procedure.

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 1-2 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 arms 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.

Questions

If you have any questions about the care of your biopsy or surgical site, you can contact the clinic that your procedure was performed at by using the information below.

UW Health West Clinic	UW Health East Clinic	UW Health 1 South Park Dermatology
451 Junction Road	5249 East Terrace Drive	1 S. Park Street
Madison, WI 53717	Madison, WI 53718	Madison, WI 53715
608-263-6226	608-265-1288	608-287-2450
800-323-8942	800-323-8942	800-323-8942

If you are a patient receiving care at UnityPoint – Meriter, Swedish American or a health system outside of UW Health, please use the phone numbers provided in your discharge instructions for any questions or concerns.

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 © 2/2019. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#7604