

# Post-Operative Information

## Instructions:

- The surgical dressing applied in the clinic is a pressure dressing and should stay on for 24 hours unless instructed otherwise.
- Smoking during the post-operative period will almost guarantee failure of a flap or graft. If you cannot stop, then decreasing the amount you smoke will help.
- You should not drink alcohol for three days following your surgery. It increases risk of bleeding.
- Anti-inflammatory medications (ibuprofen, Naproxen, ketoprofen, and many others) will increase risk of bleeding. We prefer you use Tylenol extra strength. However, we caution that many prescription pain medications have Tylenol (acetaminophen) and should not be taken with over-the-counter Tylenol.
- If your surgery was done on the head or neck area, you should not bend over for 48 hours to decrease the risk of bleeding.
- If surgery was done around the mouth area, eating soft foods for 24 hours will decrease the risk of bleeding. You should not use a straw or smoke for four weeks.
- On the day of surgery, you should go home, rest, and not exert yourself. Doing so will dramatically increase the risk of bleeding.
- Icing the area for fifteen minutes each hour during the first day will decrease the amount of swelling and bruising you do have.

## Daily Wound Care:

- After the first 24 hours, unless instructed to keep in place, remove dressing and cleanse wound with soap and water. Apply Vaseline or antibiotic ointment (Mupirocin, Polysporin, Bacitracin). We do not recommend hydrogen peroxide unless the wound is crusted.
- The wound should be covered with the Telfa non-adherent dressing with paper tape and kept covered until you return for suture removal.
- The wound care and dressing change should be done twice a day, in the morning and evening.
- It is important to keep the wound moist with Vaseline or antibiotic ointment and not let it dry out. This will affect the final outcome of your surgery.
- If you have bleeding that saturates the dress, the dressing should be removed, and continuous pressure applied to the wound for thirty minutes (without looking at it!). If after the 30 minutes the wound is still bleeding, you need to contact the above number and speak with a physician or go to the ER if they cannot be reached. If the bleeding stops, reapply the dressing as described above.

## Potential Complications:

- **Bleeding:** We expect some mild bleeding after surgery. However, bleeding that saturates the dressing is a concern. If you feel uncomfortable about the amount of bleeding, contact us. You can expect more bruising and bleeding if you take blood thinners (such as Aspirin, ibuprofen, Naproxen, Plavix, dipyridamole, heparin, Lovenox, warfarin, fish oil, or vitamin E).
- **Infection:** Signs of infection are redness that is spreading, warmth to touch, discharge or pus from the wound, or pain that is getting worse. Most skin infections do not start until three to four days after surgery. We expect some redness and bruising during the first week.
- **Pain:** Most pain from skin surgery can be controlled with over the counter Extra Strength Tylenol (acetaminophen 500mg). Take Tylenol as directed for age and weight on the packaged, usually one tablet every four hours for adults. If you take the first dose before the local numbing medicine wears off, it will be easier to control. Letting the pain get out of control usually makes it more difficult to get it under control. If Tylenol does not relieve the pain, the doctor should be notified. OTC Tylenol should not be taken with prescription pain medication.
- **Swelling and bruising:** We expect swelling and bruising for the week after surgery. Swelling usually settles on day three or four in the affected area. If the surgery was done on the forehead, the eyes usually swell and may swell shut. Ice helps to reduce swelling and bruising. You can expect more bruising if you take blood thinners.

**If you ever have a question, please call us.**

**If you cannot get in touch with us through the answering service after hours, go to the nearest ER.**

**If you had a biopsy sent for pathology and have not heard from us within two weeks, call the above number.**



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