

Post-Procedure Incision Home Care Head and Neck Surgical Oncology

Hand Hygiene

When you are discharged home after surgery it is vitally important to utilize good hand hygiene when caring for your incisions. This will help prevent infection.

Your incision has been closed with one of the following methods. Please follow the instructions that have been checked off.

Care of Non-Dissolvable Sutures

- You will need to follow up with your surgeon about 1-2 weeks after surgery to have an incision check and sutures removed
- You may shower when you are discharged home. If you had an outpatient procedure, you should wait 24-48 hours before showering.
- **Do not** let the shower hit the incision directly.
- You may allow soapy water to run over the incision after 72 hours. **Do not** rub or scrub incision
- Pat incision dry
- Please apply antibiotic ointment to your incision twice daily for 3 days. After 3 days you may switch to petroleum jelly or Aquaphor.
- A dressing is not required unless you have drainage or fluid coming from the incision

Care of Dissolvable Sutures

- You will need to follow up with your surgeon about 2 weeks after surgery to have an incision check
- You may shower when you are discharged home. If you had an outpatient procedure, you should wait 24-48 hours before showering.
- **Do not** let the shower hit the incision directly
- You may allow soapy water to run over the incision after 72 hours. **Do not** rub or scrub incision
- Pat incision dry
- Please apply antibiotics ointment to your incision twice daily for 3 days. After 3 days you may switch to petroleum jelly or Aquaphor.
- A dressing is not required unless you have drainage or fluid coming from the incision
- *Note: Your sutures will dissolve and fall off overtime. Depending on the type of suture, this can take up to 2 weeks.*

□ Care of Staples

- You will need to follow up with your surgeon about 1-2 weeks after surgery to have an incision check and staples removed
- You may shower when you are discharged home. If you had an outpatient procedure, you should wait 24-48 hours before showering.
- **Do not** let the shower hit the incision directly
- You may allow soapy water to run over the incision after 72 hours. **Do not** rub or scrub incision
- Pat incision dry
- Please apply antibiotics ointment to your incision twice daily for 3 days. After 3 days you may switch to petroleum jelly or Aquaphor.
- A dressing is not required unless you have drainage or fluid coming from the incision

□ Care of Surgical Glue (e.g. Dermabond)

- You will need to follow up with your surgeon about 2 weeks after surgery to have an incision check
- You may shower when you are discharged home. If you had an outpatient procedure, you should wait 24 hours before showering
- **Do not** let the shower hit the incision directly
- You may allow soapy water to run over the incision after 24 hours. **Do not** rub or scrub incision
- Pat incision dry
- **Do not use any ointment or cream over the incision.**
- The glue will start to peel off between 5-14 days. **Do not** try and peel the glue off before it is ready.

Special Instructions

- Call your doctor immediately if you are having any of the following symptoms:
 1. Bleeding from the incision that will not stop. You should hold firm pressure over the area and go to the nearest emergency room
 2. Separation of the skin at the incision site
 3. Worsening redness around the incision
 4. Temperature of 101°F (38.3°C) or higher
 5. Tenderness, swelling, pus, warmth, redness, or pressure around the incision site

Follow-up Care

Return for your follow-up appointment with your surgeon as scheduled.

Emergency Center

In case of any emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency center. *For non-emergencies during business hours, call our triage line at 904-202-7300 option 3.*