



Advanced Dermatology

Skin Cancer and
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POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING BIOPSIES/EXCISIONS

CARE OF THE WOUND

You will have a dressing in place when you leave the office. Do not remove this dressing until the following day. Once a day, perform the following:

- 1) Remove the old band-aid or dressing.
- 2) Clean the area gently with soap and water.
- 3) Gently dry the area by blotting with a towel or gauze.
- 4) Apply a thin layer of antibiotic ointment, such as Polysporin, or Aquaphor ointment over the biopsy site and place a new dressing over the wound.

The above should be done every day until the wound is completely healed over with new skin, or until the sutures are removed. Wound care may be done longer as directed by your doctor.

OTHER THINGS TO KNOW

- 1) Bleeding most often occurs during the first 48 hours. Normally it will not soak through the dressing. If it does, DO NOT PANIC! Apply pressure directly over the dressing for 15 minutes. If bleeding does not stop, apply direct pressure for another 15 minutes with an ice pack. If this does not work, remove the dressing, apply a dry dressing with extra gauze and apply pressure for 15 minutes. If none of the above steps help stop the bleeding, please call our office.
- 2) Normally for the first week after the surgery/biopsy, the area around the wound may be slightly pink, minimally tender and moist. It is important to keep the area covered with ointment so that a scab does not form over the surgical site. This can slow down wound healing and make a more noticeable scar. It is normal for the body to secrete fibrin (a sticky, yellow protein material) that will cover the biopsy area. Try to wipe this off daily when cleaning the site. If left in place, it can act as a "plug" and cause the area to heal sunken in.
- 3) You may have mild pain, but it should not be severe. DO NOT take aspirin or non-steroidal pain medicine (Advil, Aleve, Motrin). You may take Tylenol every 4 hours to control pain. Do not consume alcohol while taking pain medication. If you experience increasing pain or swelling after the first 48 hours or develop a fever, this could be a sign of infection and you should call our office.
- 4) It often takes 3-4 weeks for biopsies to heal. Normally, the wound will heal with a scar. Some scars become almost invisible, but most scars remain visible, at least to close inspection. Some scars actually grow. These are called keloids. If this happens, please call the office.

ITEMS NEEDED FOR WOUND CARE

- 1) Mild soap and water.
- 2) Gauze pads, washcloth or Q-tips for cleaning.
- 3) Band-aids or Telfa (non-stick) dressings.
- 4) Antibiotic ointment (Polysporin, Bacitracin), Vaseline or Aquaphor.