



Columbia University Medical Center
New York Presbyterian Hospital
Department of Dermatology
*Division of Dermatologic Surgery
and Cutaneous Oncology*



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WOUND CARE INSTRUCTIONS – OPEN WOUND

WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER SURGERY

Discomfort after your surgery is usually minimal. Tylenol, two tablets every four hours, should help to relieve any pain that you may have.

To lessen the discomfort, relieve swelling, and minimize bruising an ice pack may be applied over the dressing every 2-3 hours for 20 minutes. Elevation of the wound area is also helpful.

A pressure dressing has been applied to your wound to prevent bleeding and minimize swelling. You may notice a small amount of blood on the edges of the dressing which is normal. If bleeding persists and soils the dressing, apply firm and constant pressure over the dressing with gauze for 15 minutes, if the bleeding still persists, repeat the pressure for an additional 15 minutes.

In rare instances, if bleeding persists, call our office at 212-305-3625 between 9:00 am and 5:00pm weekdays.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY - After 5:00pm or on weekends or holidays please call 1-800-488-3468 and describe the nature of the emergency to the answering service. If necessary you can go to the emergency room or to your primary physician.

CHANGING THE DRESSING

1. _____ Peroxide
_____ Normal saline
_____ Q-tips
_____ Gauze sponges
_____ Telfa or non-stick dressing Band-aids
_____ Paper or plastic tape
_____ Polysporin, plain Bacitracin, Bactroban(ointment only), or Vaseline
_____ Xeroform petrolatum dressing

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2. The first dressing change should begin approximately _____ hours after the dressing was applied.
3. Gently remove the old dressing
4. Soak gauze in:
 - _____ Normal saline
 - _____ Peroxide
 - _____ Mixture of 1/2 peroxide & 1/2 normal saline
 - _____ Plain water
5. Place on wound for one minute. Pat wound dry with clean gauze.
6. Apply thin layer of antibiotic ointment. **Only if directed**, apply a xeroform petrolatum dressing.
7. Cover the wound with a non-stick dressing and tape, or band-aid, as instructed.
8. Follow this procedure twice daily. *

DURING THE HEALING PROCESS

Upon removing the initial dressing you may shower and allow the wound to get wet; however, do not allow the forceful stream of the water to hit the wound directly. If the wound is in your scalp, you may wash your hair with a baby shampoo to avoid any irritation.

Avoid aspirin, and aspirin products. Avoid alcohol for 2 days after surgery.

During the healing process:

1. It is normal for the edges of the wound to be pink and slightly tender to the touch.
2. You may experience mild itching and periodic discomfort around the wound.
3. It is not uncommon to have numbness in the area surrounding the surgical site.
4. If the wound becomes red, hot, or painful to the touch, call our office immediately.

After Healing:

1. Make certain that you apply a sunscreen of at least a # 30 SPF whenever you go outside.
2. Please remember that your follow-up visits are very important.