

# Care of Your Surgical Wound

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**CAUTION: IF YOU DON'T FEEL WELL AFTER SURGERY, LET US KNOW.  
DON'T LEAVE THE OFFICE AND DON'T DRIVE.**

If you have a problem or question at home, call our office promptly. After hours the answering service will reach Dr. Pittis, Dr. Hartford or Mrs. Pittis.

**ALCOHOL, ASPIRIN OR ASPIRIN CONTAINING PRODUCTS MAY CAUSE  
BLEEDING**

## **SMALL/SIMPLE WOUNDS** (Shave, Curettage, Punch Biopsy)

Try to keep the wound dry and bandage in place 1 day. After removing the bandage, gently clean the wound with soap and water. Pat dry. Keep a small amount of ointment (Vaseline) continuously on the wound to prevent a scab. All normal activities and exercise are okay after the bandage is off. Avoid swimming in ponds or other "dirty areas" until the area is healed. Do **NOT** use make-up or powders near the surgery until the surface is healed. If the area has been treated with curettage and cautery, it will be slow to heal and may take 3-4 weeks. While healing, the rim of the area may become red and the inside of the wound will have a yellowish discharge. This is fine. If the whole area becomes red, swollen and painful, this is not right and you should call the office. If you are bleeding through a bandage, take it off, hold pressure firmly on the area for 20 minutes with gauze or a clean paper towel and reapply a bandage. If you can't get bleeding to stop, call the office.

## **EXCISIONS, FLAPS, GRAFTS**

You will have a bulky, "pressure," dressing on the surgery area. This will be kept on for 1-2 days. **KEEP THIS DRESSING DRY.**

If you have any discomfort following surgery, take Tylenol or ibuprofen. Don't wait until the pain builds up. Take something at the first hint of discomfort and you may not need anything more. It is a good idea to take some Tylenol or ibuprofen before going to bed. Do not use aspirin or aspirin-containing pain relievers because they may cause bleeding.

For surgery of the head area; don't sleep flat. Have your head slightly elevated (two pillows, reclining chair).

The area may ooze a little blood especially in the first few hours after surgery. Being active will aggravate this. Hot drinks or bending over at the waist can also cause bleeding of face wounds.

If a graft area is bleeding, **CALL** the office. If bleeding occurs apply simple, direct, firm pressure for fifteen minutes. This will usually stop the bleeding. If it doesn't, call the office.

If pain increases several days after surgery, **CALL** the office. The surgery area needs to be checked for bleeding or infection.

Rest as much as possible the first 24-48 hours after surgery. Don't do any lifting, straining, or exercise. If you have sutures in place do not go swimming until they are removed.

Eat a nutritious diet. Small amounts of vitamin C and zinc may be helpful. A multivitamin with minerals may be helpful. If you have wounds around the mouth area, limit hot foods and heavy chewing for 48 hours.

## **CRYOSURGERY WOUNDS**

Expect considerable redness, swelling, and weeping of the freeze area. Within 48 hours the area will probably blister. Wounds around the lips and eyes often swell dramatically. Swelling can be lessened by use of an ice pack 5 minutes each hour for the first eight to twelve hours after surgery. If the area weeps, soak it with tap water frequently. This helps to stop the weeping which may continue for more than one week. More frequent soaks may result in faster healing.

Once the wound stops weeping, use a light coating of an ointment (Vaseline) several times each day to keep the surface lubricated. This will prevent a thick scab and allow faster healing.

You may cover the area with any non-stick pad (telfa, bandaid, etc.) This is for appearance only and isn't necessary to aid wound healing. **AVOID** adhesive tape which may irritate the skin.

**DO NOT** use makeup or powders near the wound until the surface is healed.

**REMEMBER:** Call if you have **ANY** problems or questions.

**NOTE: YOU WILL BE BILLED SEPARATELY BY THE PATHOLOGIST OR  
OUTSIDE LAB FOR ANY TISSUE SUBMITTED FOR EVALUATION.**

**May 2009**