

WOUND CARE INSTRUCTIONS FOR A SUTURED WOUND

MEDICAL EMERGENCY # 301-807-8807

- 1) Wound care begins the morning after surgery. You may get the wound wet, you may shower, you may wash your face, and you may wash your hair.
- 2) Once you have removed the bandage, begin by using soap and water to clean the wound. Use a clean Q-tip or a piece of gauze with soap and water in a small bowl. Gently pat the wound dry. Then apply antibiotic ointment to the wound. Antibiotic ointment may be applied in one of two ways: the ointment may be applied directly to the incision line of the wound with a clean Q-tip and then covered with a bandage, or the ointment may be applied directly to the bandage before placing the bandage on the wound. If the bandage is not big enough to cover the wound, use 2 or 3 bandages side by side. You may also use non-adherent gauze and paper tape to cover the area.
- 3) Repeat dressing changes, with antibiotic ointment, twice daily for 3 days. After 3 days discontinue the antibiotic ointment but continue to keep the wound greasy with Petroleum Jelly Vaseline for one more week. The wound may be left uncovered after 3-4 days, or you may continue to cover it for as long as you desire for cosmetic purposes, but it is important to place enough antibiotic ointment / Vaseline on the wound to keep it greasy. Wound care is complete after 10 days unless there is oozing or a scab is present, at which point you will continue to apply Vaseline.
- 4) After surgery, please continue all your current medications as prescribed by your other physicians.

If the antibiotic is “over the counter” (Bacitracin or Polysporin) use for only 3 days. If the antibiotic is “prescription” (Mupirocin) you may use it for one week. Neosporin/ Triple Antibiotic should be used for only 2 days.

IMMEDIATELY POST SURGERY

- For all surgery above the mouth, including the scalp, expect swelling around the eyes. The swelling may be accompanied with bruising which may appear as red, pink, blue, black, green, brown or yellow discoloration. **This is very normal.** Swelling tends to get worse each day for the first 3 days and on the fourth day will begin to improve. Swelling around the eyes is most prominent upon awakening and as you get up and go about your day, gravity will pull that swelling down.
- The wound has a **“ridged” look** and **this is very normal.** Nothing will happen to its appearance for the first few weeks and then as the stitches dissolve the wound will smooth out. This is done for cosmetic reasons to keep the final scar as thin as possible.
- It is normal for the ridge to be pink for a few weeks after surgery and as the scar matures the pinkness will fade.
- You may resume normal activity 48 hours after surgery unless otherwise instructed.

General Information

- a) It is normal to have some bleeding from the wound for the first 48 hours and to have some oozing from the wound during the first week.
- b) Once the wound is sealed closed (approximately 10 days) you may apply make-up.
- c) The wound will have 1 or more layers of stitches. All of the stitches will dissolve by themselves unless Dr. Rotter asks you to return to the office in 2-3 weeks for suture removal. The surface layer of stitches will last anywhere from 2 days to 3 weeks.

- d) The underlying layer of stitches will last 4-5 months. Sometimes, in 6 weeks to 3 months, this layer of stitches may come to the surface of the skin. If this occurs, they will look like pimples. You may pinch them or if they cause you discomfort or problems, please give the office a call and we will have you come in or give you instructions over the phone.
- e) For wounds on the lower legs, there will be 2 finger widths of redness around the wound during the healing period and **this is very normal**.
- f) **Bleeding:** In the event that bleeding should occur, remove the dressing and apply constant pressure directly on the bleeding area with gauze or a clean, dry towel for twenty minutes. **Do not release pressure to check to see if the bleeding has stopped until after the 20 minutes has passed.** If bleeding persists, call the doctor and/or go to the nearest emergency room unless otherwise instructed.
- g) **Signs of Infection:** fever, extreme redness, streaks of red, white fluid or pus, sharp pain, hot to the touch. If you suspect infection, please contact the office.

MEDICATION INFORMATION

1. For **post-operative pain control**- take 2 **Tylenol / Advil (or Ibuprofen)** every 4 hours (or as directed on the label on the bottle) until you go to sleep. You will usually only need this medication for the first 24-48 hrs. If you have a history of gastrointestinal bleeding or are on blood thinners, we recommend you only take Tylenol after the first 24hrs.
2. You have been **prescribed pain medication**, _____ to be taken _____. If you begin to experience nausea, discontinue the medication immediately, but be aware that this nausea may last for 24hrs. Eating some toast or some applesauce may alleviate these nausea symptoms.
3. You have been prescribed an **oral antibiotic**, _____ to be taken _____, to prevent infection. Please take the antibiotic, with food, until it is completed. If you experience stomach upset, diarrhea or a rash, discontinue immediately and let us know.

Please, feel free to call the office (703) 442 0300) at any time with your questions or concerns. Dr. Rotter will see you whenever needed. If you have any concern about the cosmetic result, we ask you to return in 3 to 4 months as sutures take time to dissolve and wounds take time to mature.

Steven M. Rotter M.D.: _____ Date: _____ / _____ / _____