

## Department of Dermatology, Allergy and Skin Surgery

### **Patient Information – Post Operative Wound Care Secondary Intention**

The doctor has decided that instead of closing your wound with stitches, it will be left to heal itself. This is called healing by secondary intention. Instead of a linear scar, there will be a circular or oval shaped scar depending on the shape of the lesion being removed. It may take up to 8 weeks for the scar to heal from the bottom up.

#### **Post Operative Advice**

Unless advised otherwise:

1. When the local anaesthetic has worn off after 2-4 hours, you may experience pain or throbbing. We recommend simple painkillers such as Paracetamol 2 x 500mg tablets every 4-6 hours up to 8 tablets per day.  
Avoid Aspirin, Brufen or Voltarol unless already being taken for another condition, as these have a tendency to prolong bleeding time.
2. For surgery on the head/face: Keep head upright, no leaning forward or bending down for 24 hours. Use an extra pillow at night.  
  
For surgery on a limb: elevation can help reduce swelling and throbbing.
3. Occasionally oozing or bleeding may occur from the wound site. Do not remove the dressing, apply pressure using a clean tissue or handkerchief for 15 minutes.

**Safe & compassionate care,**

**every time**

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4. Please leave the dressing in place for 48 hours. Then soak the dressing under the shower or in cooled, boiled water and gently remove it. Do not use cotton wool as the fibres adhere to the wound.
5. Pat the area dry or leave to air dry. Then apply a thin layer of clean/new Vaseline and cover with a water proof plaster. This is to prevent a scab forming.
6. It is normal for the area to be red and swollen. However if you experience an increase of inflammation, redness or pain after 3-4 days, we recommend you contact your GP as you may need antibiotics. Alternatively you may contact the Dermatology nurses on 01494 734632 during working hours.
7. When the wound has healed over we advise gentle massage with Vaseline to help soften the scar. The scar may appear red for many months and wounds take 12 to 18 months to heal properly.

### **How can I help reduce healthcare associated infections?**

Infection control is important to the well-being of our patients and for that reason we have infection control procedures in place. Keeping your hands clean is an effective way of preventing the spread of infections. We ask that you, and anyone visiting you, use the hand sanitiser available at the main entrance of the hospital and at the entrance to every clinical area before coming in to and after leaving the clinical area or hospital. In some situations hands may need to be washed at the sink using soap and water rather than using the hand sanitiser. Staff will let you know if this is the case.

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If you require a translation or alternative format of this leaflet please call the Dermatology Department on 01494 734604.