

Wound care after a minor surgical procedure

How should I look after the wound?

- Leave the dressing in place and keep the area dry for a minimum of two days.
- If the dressing remains clean and intact it can stay in place until your stitch removal appointment.
- If the dressing becomes heavily soaked by either blood or water, wash hands, remove the soiled dressing and apply a new dressing
- If the dressing becomes loose, apply some extra tape to secure it or change to a new dressing
- If you notice any white strips stuck over the wound, leave these in place until they curl or become loose. Please do not peel these off unless you have been specifically advised to.
- Once your stitches are removed you may leave the wound uncovered at this stage. However, if there are any open areas or any oozing is evident, please continue to dress the wound until it is fully healed.
- Avoid vigorous exercise or heavy lifting as this causes skin tension and can result in the wound opening or a stretched scar.

What should I do if the wound is painful?

- Local anaesthetic will wear off after 1–2 hours
- If you experience discomfort, you can take paracetamol (follow the instructions on the packet about the recommended dose)
- If you experience pain not controlled by paracetamol, please contact The Royal Marsden Macmillan Hotline.

What should I do if the wound starts to bleed?

It is normal to see a small amount of blood or leakage on the dressing.

If you experience bleeding that soaks the dressing:

- Sit down and press the area firmly for 10 minutes.
- If it continues, apply an ice pack firmly for 10 minutes.
- If the bleeding continues following the above instructions, please contact The Royal Marsden Hotline or your nursing team.



Healing:

- Some wounds take 2–3 weeks to heal, occasionally longer for wounds on the leg.
- The resulting scar maybe a little red initially but this will fade in time. Once your wound is fully healed, you can apply a non-perfumed moisturiser to soften the scar. Please only do this if there are no open or scabbed areas otherwise this can result in infection or wound breakdown.

You should seek further medical advice if you experience any of the following:

- Bleeding that does not stop after applying pressure and ice
- Excessive pain
- Signs of possible infection such as fever, spreading redness and warmth around the wound after 5 days post-procedure, foul smelling discharge.
- You have any concerns regarding healing.

If you have not received a letter with your results or seen a doctor within 3–4 weeks, please contact your key worker.

Post-operative information for your GP/Practice Nurse

Date: _____

Procedure: _____

The patient requires the following treatment

- Absorbable sutures _____ which should not be removed
- Non-absorbable sutures _____ remove in _____

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Skin Clinical Nurse Specialist team via MyMarsden, or leave a voicemail on 0207 811 8011

