

# Wound Care Instructions Following Minor Surgery

After your surgery, a bandage may be placed over the area that has stitches. This will help to prevent bleeding. Please follow these instructions over the next 7 to 14 days. They will help prevent any complications as your wound heals. Please take this information sheet with you when you attend your practice nurse appointment.

## For the first 24 hours after your surgery

1. Leave the bandage on and keep it dry. If it should come loose, you may retape it, but do not take it off.
2. Relax and take it easy. No vigorous exercise or heavy lifting. This could cause the wound to bleed.
3. Post-operative pain is usually mild. You may take paracetamol, 2 tablets every 6 hours as needed. This can be started as soon as you get home. Avoid aspirin or any drugs such as ibuprofen unless the doctor has allowed it.
- You may see a small amount of drainage or blood on your bandage. This is normal. However, if the drainage or bleeding continues and saturates the bandage, please do as follows:
  - Apply firm pressure with a gauze swab over the bandage for 15 minutes
  - If bleeding still continues, apply an ice pack for 15 minutes to the bandaged area. A simple ice pack can be made from placing a bag of frozen peas into a dry plastic bag; this avoids wetting the bandage.
  - If bleeding still continues go to the nearest Accident and Emergency Department.

## 24 hours after your surgery

1. Carefully remove the bandage. If it seems very sticky or difficult to get off, you may need to soak it off in the shower.
2. After the bandage is off, you may shower and get the wound wet. However, **do not** let the forceful stream of the shower hit the wound directly.
3. Follow these simple wound care and dressing change instructions:
  - Once a day, clean the wound gently with soapy warm water. (You can use a cotton bud if you wish).
  - Pat the wound dry.
  - Apply a thin layer of petroleum jelly to cover the wound
  - Cover the wound with a plaster.
  - Repeat this every day until you have your stitches removed.

## What is normal?

1. The first couple of days your wound may be tender and may bleed slightly when doing wound care.
2. There may be swelling and bruising around the wound, especially if it is near the eyes.
3. The area around your wound may be numb for several weeks or even months.
4. You may experience periodic sharp pain as the wound heals.
5. The stitch line will look dark pink at first and the edges of the wound will be reddened. This will fade gradually.

## Seek medical advice if:

1. You have bleeding that will not stop after applying pressure and ice.
2. You have excessive pain.
3. You have signs or symptoms of an infection such as fever, or redness, warmth or foul smelling drainage from the wound.