

Valley Skin Cancer Surgery

Dermatologic and Mohs Micrographic Surgery

Post-operative (after surgery) instructions from Dr. Jenna Wald

Wound Care:

1. Leave the bandage on for 24-48 hours.
2. When ready to change dressing, change it after showering (to protect from water pressure). At the end of the shower remove the bandage and **gently** cleanse the wound using soap, a clean washcloth or q-tip, and water.
 - a. You will likely notice some red on the bandage for the first 2-3 days (see below).
3. After cleansing, immediately cover the wound with ointment (Vaseline or Aquaphor) and a bandage.
 - a. Wounds do not need fresh air or to breath. The surgical site should be covered until sutures are removed.
 - b. Do **not** use triple antibiotic/Neosporin.
4. Repeat wound care daily (remove bandage, wash, apply ointment, rebandage) until sutures are removed.
5. Sutures are typically removed 5-7 days after surgery on the face and 10-14 days on the body.

Activity:

1. NONE!! You just had surgery... use this time to rest and heal, NOT to run errands. This means no hiking, biking, yoga, golf, or anything that will increase your heart-rate/blood pressure until 7 days after sutured face/neck sites and 14 days for all other sutured sites. You may resume activity after 3 days if your site was not sutured. Ease back into activity.
2. Do not lift anything greater than 10 lbs for 7 days.
3. Increased activity may lead to complications which directly affect what your scar will look like.
4. Keep the surgical site elevated.
 - a. For head/neck sites avoid bending down to pick thing up or tie your shoes. For hands/fingers/legs elevate on pillows.
5. You will also want to avoid standing water (bath tubs, pools, hot-tubs) as these may increase the risk of infection.

Discomfort/Swelling: It is normal to experience discomfort/throbbing/aching) after surgery (similar to a stubbed toe). Usually, it is the most intense 24-48 hours after surgery.

1. Apply a cold compress to the area 10-15 minutes of every hour (a bag of frozen peas or a gel pack covered with paper towel is easy to reuse).
2. Take 2 extra strength acetaminophen/Tylenol every 6 hours (1,000 mg total).
**If you have liver issues, please consult your primary care before taking acetaminophen.*
3. If ice and acetaminophen are not enough, alternate with ibuprofen/Motrin/Advil 2-3 tablets (400-600 mg) every 6 hours.
**If you have kidney issues or take blood thinners, please contact your primary care before taking ibuprofen.*
 - a. Take acetaminophen first because is better for post operative pain and doesn't increase bleeding.
 - b. If you opt to take ibuprofen, it should be IN ADDITION to acetaminophen. They work BETTER TOGETHER.

Bleeding/Oozing: Some oozing of clear fluid or blood is a **normal** (especially if you take blood thinners or drink alcohol).

- If you bandage becomes soaked with blood → do not worry, this can happen. Simply apply a new bandage.
- If the wound is actively bleeding (running down your face) → Apply new bandage, then hold **firm** pressure over the wound for 15 minutes → do not remove the newly applied bandage as this will re-start the process.
 - o Do not peek during the 15 minutes!!! It's like waiting for Santa! If you keep peeking, he will never arrive. Similarly, if you keep looking to see if it has stopped, it will take longer/won't stop bleeding.

Bruising: Bruising and swelling are also expected outcomes of surgery. Occasionally it will travel to an eye 1-4 days after the surgery, leading to a puffy or closed/discolored eye due to gravity while you sleep, this will resolve on its own.

Infection: Expect your wound to be slightly sore and pink. If the area becomes increasingly tender, red or warm, contact the office. If you have a fever (temperature above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius), chills or pus draining from your wound, contact the office or go to your local emergency department if this occurs over the weekend.

Dietary Restrictions. Avoid alcoholic beverages for 3 days. If your surgery involved your lips or mouth, avoid hot liquids/foods for the first 2 hours after surgery. Eat soft foods for 3 days. Do not smoke for at least 2 weeks after surgery.

After Hours Issues: If you have question or concerns, please call during business hours 8-3:30 pm, Monday through Thursday or 8 to 1:30 pm on Friday. If you need to reach the on-call physician for issues that cannot wait until the next business day, call (480) 214-0388, option 7 and leave a message. If you are not contacted within 2 hours please call again. If you need urgent medical care for any reason, immediately go to your local emergency department.

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Wound care instructions if you had a **SKIN GRAFT**.

Instructions for the donor site (usually behind the ear or on the clavicle- with blue/black sutures)

1. Please see the general wound care instructions.
2. Sutures are removed in 7-14 days.

Instructions for the skin graft site

1. NEVER WASH OR PICK AT THE GRAFT.
2. KEEP THE GRAFT COVERED AT ALL TIMES → 'ALLOWING IT TO BREATHE' CAN/WILL KILL IT
 - a. Leave the bandage we place on for 48 hours
 - b. After 48 hours, you will perform the following steps **twice a day**:
 1. Remove the bandage
 - If there is EVER pain or it is difficult to remove → **soak the bandage** in water so that there is no pulling or pain.
 - DO NOT WASH THE GRAFT
 - DO NOT ATTEMPT TO PICK CRUST/BLOOD OFF THE GRAFT
 2. Apply copious amounts of mupirocin ointment (or Vaseline) with a clean q-tip
 - If the graft is every dry or crusty, you are not putting on enough ointment!
 3. Immediately re-cover the wound with a non-stick bandage