



# Sunshine State DERMATOLOGY AND SKIN CANCER CENTER

## **Dermatological Surgery Post Care Instructions**

As with any surgery, how you care for yourself after dermatological surgery is important for achieving the best possible results.

*After your surgery with Sunshine State Dermatology and Skin Cancer Center, please follow these instructions:*

- Immediately following surgery you will have a pressure dressing over the surgical site. This is a larger bulky dressing that may feel tight and cause some mild discomfort. The purpose of this dressing is to decrease your chances of bleeding following the surgery and also decrease your risk of hematoma. **For 24 hours following surgery keep the dressing in place and dry. Do not touch it or get it wet unless otherwise advised.**
- During the first 24 hours, ice may be applied **AROUND** the surgical site to decrease swelling and bruising. We recommend the ice be put in a Ziplock plastic bag so that the dressing does not get wet, or you may even use a frozen bag of vegetables such as peas. After 24 hours, the ice may be applied directly to the surgical site. When applying ice, apply for 15-20 minutes to the effective areas and then leave off 40-60 minutes. Try and ice the affected areas 6-7 times a day following surgery and ice can be done as long as swelling is present. This is especially important for surgeries near or around the eye, including the forehead and scalp.
- Please expect bruising and swelling to occur around surgical sites as this is normal following dermatological surgery. Bruising and swelling can be prevented and/or helped with ice use, and should resolve 7-10 days after the procedure. Please keep in mind bruising may take longer to completely resolve.
- For care of your surgical site, you will need antibacterial soap, lukewarm water, either Aquaphor or a prescribed antibiotic ointment, non-stick telfa pads and paper tape. Avoid hydrogen peroxide, Neosporin, Polysporin or any unapproved topicals. You may remove the pressure bandage after 24 hours. You may then get the surgical site wet. **Twice a day, wash the surgical site gently with lukewarm, soapy water either in the shower or by hand.** Pat the surgical site dry, then apply either Aquaphor or your prescribed antibiotic ointment, apply a dressing. This dressing twice daily comma washing and applying new ointment each time. **Repeat this every day until returning to our office for removal of the sutures.**
- Following surgery, the majority of our patients experience only mild discomfort. In part, your level of discomfort will depend upon how large your wound is and where it is located. Most discomfort occurs within 24-48 hours (about 2 days) following surgery. We recommend taking acetaminophen

(Tylenol) help with discomfort. On occasion, a stronger medication will be prescribed. If you have any additional concerns regarding discomfort following surgery, or you cannot take Tylenol, please let us know.

- Infection is always a possibility following surgery though we make every effort to prevent this. While caring for your surgical site, please let us know if you experience any of the following: redness that does not fade or continues to worsen, pain that persists, skin that is hot to touch surrounding the surgical site or drainage. Also let us know if you experience a hard lump underneath the surgical site, extensive bruising, or swelling that does not improve as these may be signs of hematoma.
- At times, the area surrounding your surgical site will be numb to the touch. This area of numbness may persist for several months or longer. In some instances, it may be permanent. If this occurs, please discuss it with your physician at your follow-up visit.
- Generally, we will see you back in the office between 7-14 days following surgery for removal of the sutures. If you have a wound healing by itself, with no sutures, we will have you return in 9-10 days (about 1 and a half weeks) to check the wound.
- While the sutures are in place, we cannot recommend any strenuous activity or exercise until the sutures are removed. If you have a specific question regarding an activity, you may ask us at the time of surgery. For some areas, like the legs, you may be placed on crutches or ask to use a cane.

#### **Special Considerations:**

Showing surgery on the face, it may be helpful to sleep elevated in bed to reduce swelling. Swelling can be worse in the morning and will get better throughout the day. Smoking is detrimental to wound healing. It is recommended to stop or decrease for 2-3 weeks leading up to and following surgery.

#### **Location specific wound instructions:**

Around lips or cheeks – minimize activity for 1-2 weeks; avoid excessive facial expressions, eating hard or large foods

On the lower legs – elevate the leg as often as possible. This can be performed by placing pillows beneath your feet. Minimizing weight bearing activity.

On the head or neck – elevate your head and neck using pillows while sleeping to avoid excessive swelling/bruising

**DO NOT use alcohol or hydrogen peroxide to surgical site at anytime. Do not stop taking any prescribed medications, such as Coumadin or Warfarin. All prescriptions are sent through the Internet with this, there may be a delay from the office to the pharmacy in which your medications are received. Please wait until after 5:00 PM to contact your pharmacy first to see if your prescriptions are ready.**

**To reach the office after hours please call 941 220 6811**

**For the nurses station please call 941 282 3376**