

# NWDC Mohs & Dermatology Associates: Care with Open Wounds

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## Dermatology Reception: 281-943-6640

Cypress Station Office: 1140A Cypress Station Dr., Suite 300. Houston, TX 77090

Woodlands Office: 9100 Forest Crossing Dr., Suite A. Spring, TX 77381

**Healing on your own:** Some wounds heal best without stitches (healing by Mother Nature or second intention). When wounds are open, please remember these points;

- ✓ **Stress the wound and it will stress you** (See activity restrictions below).
- ✓ **It takes time:** healing takes several weeks (3-8 wks depending on location and wound size). The face heals the fastest while the legs and feet take longest to heal.
- ✓ **Infection is rare in open wounds. Drainage is common:** especially the first 1-2 weeks after surgery. Oozing is clear and pink to yellow and is not an infection. Dressing changes may need to be more frequent (2-3 times daily) the first week and less so as drainage decreases.
- ✓ **Wounds heal best when covered and moist. Avoid crusting or scabbing.** Keep your wound covered unless instructed otherwise.

## Dressing Materials & Instructions

- ☐ Telfa® or non-adherent dressing pads
- ☐ 4 x 4 gauze or cotton pads (like those for removing make-up)
- ☐ Gloves (non-powdered, non-latex)
- ☐ Micropore paper tape or Band-aids
- ☐ Topical ointment such as Vaseline™ petrolatum, Aquaphor®
- ☐ Do not use Polysporin®, Neosporin®, or other antibiotic ointments.

Other materials: \_\_\_\_\_

1. For 24 hours; do not remove our pressure dressing unless soaked. Keep the wound dry.
2. After 24 hours; Wash your hands, wear gloves, and remove the dressing. If there is crusting or scabbing, then get in the shower and soak it off. Do NOT forcefully rub the crust or your wound.
3. Gently wash the wound with clean water (tap water or saline) and pat dry with a clean Gauze or cotton pad. Do not use hydrogen peroxide.
4. Apply a generous amount of ointment (Vaseline™, Aquaphor®) on the wound
5. Cover the wound with Telfa® or nonstick gauze and secure with tape. Band-aids may also be used, but make sure the sticky part of the Band-aid does not touch the wound.
6. Repeat your dressing changes (steps 2 through 5) based on the amount of drainage. More drainage = more dressing changes. Leg wounds drain more than wounds on the chest or higher.
7. As long as your drainage is not pus-like (thick yellow, sometimes smelly), then it is unlikely to be infected.

## For *any* concerns about your surgery, please call:

During office hours: Dr Nguyen: 281-465-1775, Dr Farnsworth: 281-943-6636

After hours, please call: Dr Nguyen: 832-643-8592, Dr Farnsworth: 504-858-7440

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### Activities after Surgery

- For 24 hours: 1) have someone with you if you took any medication to help you relax. 2) Do not get the dressings wet. You may shower after 24 hours. 3) Avoid alcohol.
- For one week after surgery, avoid any activity that pulls or stretches your wound, increases your heart rate, or rubs against your dressing (avoid sports, sex, vacuuming, bending below your waist, lifting more than 10 lbs).
- Face Surgery: do not bend your head below your waist. Elevate your head with 1 to 2 extra pillows when sleeping or lying down. Arm or Leg Surgery: raise the limb as much as possible above your waist when you are resting. Lip Surgery: eat soft foods. Keep your lip well lubricated with ointment (Vaseline™ petrolatum, Aquaphor®).
- Baths/Swimming/Hot Tub: avoid submerging the wound under water until it has sealed over.

### What About Bleeding After Surgery?

The risk of bleeding is greatest in the first 48 hours after surgery. If you have any bleeding, follow these instructions;

1. Lie down, elevate the wound if possible, and apply **continuous, firm pressure** for at least 15 minutes. Do not stop applying pressure until 15 minutes have passed. Repeat up to 3 times.
2. If the bleeding has soaked your dressing, it should be removed and a new one placed.
3. If the bleeding has not stopped after three applications of 15 minute pressure, call our office at 281-465-1775. After hours, call Dr Nguyen at 832-643-8592.
4. Do not go to the emergency room unless it is an emergency. Most issues related to your surgery may be addressed in the office setting.

### When Should I call the Office or Dr Nguyen?

Call us (phone numbers at bottom of page) if you have:

- Fever of 101° Fahrenheit or higher (38.3 ° Celsius)
- Bleeding not controlled by direct pressure
- Pain that increases each day or that is not relieved by over-the-counter medications
- Rapid or increasing swelling, heat, and pain around the wound
- Reopening of the wound at any time
- Increased or enlarging redness and warmth around the wound
- Pus drainage from the wound

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### Swelling, Redness, Bruising and Drainage

It is normal to have some swelling, redness, and bruising - all of which will improve over time (days to weeks). A black eye is common if you had surgery around or above the eyes. Elevating the wound on extra pillows will reduce swelling. Applying a cold pack (bag of frozen peas) will also help reduce swelling. Once you get home, hold the ice pack against the dressing for about 10 minutes, several times an hour. You may continue this until bedtime and even the following day. Do not apply the cold pack directly on your skin.

### When am I healed?

The site is sealed if it no longer oozes and pink smooth skin has completely covered the wound. Even then, it is still healing underneath for many more months. Continue applying a thin layer of Aquaphor® ointment on the wound for 2 more months. Firmness and healing sensations (mild itching, tingling, pulling) may still be felt 4-6 months later. Your scar will not be mature until 12 months or more after surgery. Patience, following wound care instructions, avoiding stress on the wound, and keeping your follow up appointments is all critical to optimize your results.

Experience, Excellence, Commitment

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