



Care of Wound with Stitches or Staples

- Leave your pressure bandage on for 24 hours. This is very important to insure that there will not be any bleeding under the stitches.
- After 24 hours; remove the bandage and begin washing the site gently with antibacterial soap (like Dial or Lever) once or twice a day.
- After washing, apply a generous amount of Polysporin ointment (or similar) directly over the stitches. Do NOT let the stitches get crusty or scabby.
- Cover with an appropriately fitting bandage. A non-stick bandage and paper tape are usually less irritating than Band-Aids. Wounds on the arms or legs are usually easier to bandage with a non-stick bandage and an ace wrap.
- Discomfort, swelling and bruising usually occur within the first 24 hours after surgery. If the wound is on your face above the brow area or scalp, you should expect your eyes to be quite swollen, even black and blue the day after surgery. You may sleep with your head elevated to help with these side effects. If swelling occurs, ice pack the wound 15 minutes of every hour (while you are awake) for the first two days after surgery.
- If the wound starts to bleed, apply pressure over the area for 15 continuous minutes without peeking. The direct pressure should stop any bleeding. If after 15 minutes, you are still bleeding, call our office immediately at **677-9044 option 4**.
- If the skin around the wound becomes red, tender, or hot to the touch, you may have an infection. If you are not sure, call our office at **523-1404** during office hours. If after hours, call **677-9044 option 4**.
- Removing the stitches is virtually painless and is done usually 7 days after surgery on the face and 14 days on the body. A medical assistant usually removes them.
- It is not recommended to swim in lakes, rivers, or ponds until the wound heals completely (pool water is fine).
- Most scalp wounds do not have to be covered with a bandage. Simply shampoo the site gently and apply a generous amount of Polysporin or similar ointment.
- Wounds on the face usually heal within one to two weeks. Wounds on the arms, trunk, and upper legs heal in about three weeks. Wounds on the lower legs, especially in people over forty, can take up to 3 months to heal. If you are concerned about how well your surgery site is healing, please call our office at **677-9044 option 4**. **Skin wounds continue to improve in cosmetic appearance for one year.**

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