

# NORTHSTAR

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## DERMATOLOGY

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### Post-Operative Wound Care Instructions

#### Biopsy Care:

1. Keep the wound covered and dry for the next 24 hours.
2. Remove bandage and gently clean the area with soap and water then apply a thin coat of Vaseline.
3. Cover the area with a Band-Aid or non-stick telfa pad, gauze and tape.
4. Repeat this 1 to 2 times a day for at least a week.
5. The wound may be left uncovered after a 2-3 days, but continue to clean it daily and apply Vaseline or Aquaphor ointment until the wound is healed, or until suture removal (if you have sutures). You may cover the wound when going out in public or if the wound is irritated by clothing.

#### Following your surgical procedure:

1. For the rest of the day after your procedure, keep your activity level to a minimum. Excessive bending, lifting or physical activity may increase the risk of bleeding.
2. For post-operative pain, we recommend Tylenol (1-2 pills every 6 hours as needed), or you may take a stronger analgesic prescribed by your physician. It's best to take these medications before the pain becomes severe, rather than waiting until pain becomes too uncomfortable. Do Not take Aspirin, Motrin, Advil, Ibuprofen or other aspirin-like medications since they can increase the risk of bleeding. Also, Do Not drink alcohol for at least 3 days after your procedure.
3. If you have sutures, avoid shaving over the surgery site to prevent tearing off the sutures.

#### Skin Surgery closed with Steri-strips:

1. Keep the pressure bandage in place and dry for 24 – 48 hours. Afterwards, carefully remove the bandage without removing the Steri-strips.
2. Use a large water proof bandage to cover the Steri-strips when showering in order to keep the area dry.
3. If the edges of the Steri-Strips begin to come loose, trim the free ends with a pair of scissors. Do not pull on the loose edges of the strips, as the incision could reopen.

#### Skin Surgery closed with sutures:

1. Keep the wound covered and dry for the next 24 hours.
2. Remove bandage and gently clean the area with soap & water then apply a thin coat of Vaseline.
3. Cover the area with a Band-Aid or non-stick telfa pad, gauze and tape. Repeat this 1 to 2 times a day for at least a week.
4. The wound may be left uncovered after a 2-3 days, but continue to clean it daily and apply Vaseline or Aquaphor ointment until the wound is healed, or until suture removal. You may cover the wound when going out in public or if the wound is irritated by clothing.

#### Few things that can happen following surgery:

1. Bleeding: It's not uncommon to have a small amount of blood-tinged leaking around the bandage site. To avoid excessive bleeding, limit your activity for the first 48 hours. Keep the surgical site elevated above the level of the heart. Avoid straining or vigorous activity. If you had surgery on the face (scalp or ears), avoid bending or stooping over. It may be best to sleep propped up on pillows or in a lounge chair for the first 24 hours.
2. Swelling & Bruising: This is very common, especially on procedures done on the face or around the eyes. It's not uncommon to have a black, swollen eye. You may use an ice-pack for 15 minutes every 2-3 hours for the first day to reduce swelling.
3. Pain: Post-operative pain is usually minimal. In nearly all cases, Extra Strength Tylenol will relieve the pain. However, you may be prescribed a stronger pain medicine depending on your procedure.
4. Infection: Infection seldom occurs with skin surgery if wound care instructions are followed closely. Signs of infection are: increased pain, swelling, expanding redness, yellowish drainage or fever 3 or 4 days after surgery.
5. Itching: Mild itching is normal part of the healing process. This can be reduced by keeping the wound moist with antibiotic ointment. However, severe itching with redness and small blisters may be due to an allergic reaction to the antibiotic ointment or adhesive tape/bandage.