

Post-Surgical Care Instructions

1. Wound Care

First 24–48 Hours

- Keep the dressing clean, dry, and undisturbed unless you were told otherwise.
- A small amount of blood spotting is normal. If the bandage becomes saturated, apply firm pressure with clean gauze for 10–15 minutes.

After 24–48 Hours

- Remove the initial bandage only if permitted by your surgeon.
- Clean the area gently with mild soap and water—do not scrub.
- Pat dry with a clean towel or gauze.

Ointment

- Apply a thin layer of petroleum jelly (Vaseline) or the ointment provided by your surgeon every day until healed.
- Avoid antibiotic ointments unless specifically instructed.

Bandaging

- Cover the wound with non-stick gauze or an adhesive bandage.
- Change the dressing once daily, or more often if it becomes wet or soiled.

2. Activity Restrictions

- Avoid strenuous exercise, bending, heavy lifting, or activities that elevate heart rate for 48–72 hours, or longer if the surgery was on a high-tension area (back, shoulder, legs).
- Avoid stretching the skin around the incision to reduce the risk of wound opening or scarring.
- If the surgery was on the face, avoid facial treatments, shaving around the site, or makeup until cleared.

3. Pain Management

- Mild soreness or tightness is normal.
- Use acetaminophen (Tylenol) if needed for pain control
(Avoid ibuprofen or aspirin in the first 24 hours unless approved, as they can increase bleeding.)
- Apply an ice pack wrapped in a cloth to the area for 10–15 minutes at a time during the first day to reduce swelling.

4. Bleeding and Swelling

- Minor oozing is normal.
- If bleeding occurs, apply firm pressure with clean gauze for 15 minutes without checking. If still bleeding, repeat once more. Contact your provider if it persists.

5. Showering & Bathing

- Showering is allowed after surgery, but avoid letting direct, forceful water hit the surgical site and do not submerge it under water.
- Avoid soaking the area (baths, hot tubs, pools, ocean/lake water) for at least 1–2 weeks, or until your surgeon says it's safe.

6. Suture & Closure Care

- Sutures: Usually removed in 5–14 days depending on location. Do not pick at stitches or scabs.
- Steristrips / Skin Glue: Leave in place until they fall off naturally. Do not apply ointment over medical glue unless told to.

7. Scar Care (After the Wound Has Healed)

Once the incision is fully closed and no scabs remain:

- Begin gentle scar massage (if advised).
- Apply broad-spectrum sunscreen SPF 30+ daily to prevent scar darkening.
- Silicone gel or silicone sheets may be used to minimize scarring (ask your surgeon before use).

8. Contact your surgeon or seek medical care if you notice:

- Increasing redness spreading around the wound
- Worsening pain after day 2–3
- Yellow/green discharge or foul odor
- Fever or chills
- Excessive swelling or warmth at the site
- Persistent heavy bleeding
- Wound edges opening
- Severe pain unrelieved by medication
- Any concerns that feel unusual or urgent

9. Follow-Up

- Attend all scheduled follow-up visits.
- If biopsy samples were taken, you should receive results within the 1 to 2 weeks. If you haven't heard from us, in 2 weeks, please call our office.