

## 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.

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### 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.

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### 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.

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### 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.

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## **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.

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## **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).

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## **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

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## **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.