



GRANT GERNER, MD

Wound Care Instructions for Excisions or Wounds with Sutures

Activity

Refrain from any strenuous physical activity for two days. Those taking aspirin or any blood thinners should refrain from strenuous activity for at least four days.

Try to avoid lying on the wound site. It is best to sleep with the wound site elevated above the heart. For facial wounds, sleep with the wound upward if possible.

Water/Bathing

Do NOT submerge the wound below water. No bathing in a tub, swimming, or hot tubbing while the sutures are in place. After 24 hours, rinsing the wound with water or saline for cleaning is recommended. Never clean a wound with alcohol, hydrogen peroxide, or any other chemical unless specifically advised to do so by Dr. Gerner.

Dressing the Wound

Supplies needed: clean petrolatum, (e.g. Aquaphor), a squeeze tube is cleaner than a tub. Do NOT use Neosporin, or any ointment containing neomycin. Appropriate sized bandages (there are many quality brands, Nexcare bandages by 3M are among the best).

Cotton tipped applicators, e.g. Q-tips (optional). Sterile saline, e.g. Wound Wash Saline (optional).

The surgical dressing should be left in place _____ days. You should change it sooner than this if there are more than small spots of blood visible through the dressing. Clean the wound daily or every-other-day either in the shower or by running water or sterile saline over the wound. It can be helpful to wet the dressing for a few minutes before removing it. If there is dried blood around the wound or the stitches, gently clean it with warm, soapy water and your clean fingers, or you may clean it gently with gauze or a clean washrag. Blot, do not wipe, the wound dry.

After the wound is clean and dry, apply petrolatum ointment to thoroughly coat the wound and the suture holes. Apply a bandage over the petrolatum to keep the wound clean. Remove the dressing and clean the wound every one-to-two days.

Wound Check by Dr. Gerner

_____ Schedule a wound check in 3-4 days.

_____ No wound check needed.

Suture Removal: Schedule an appointment in _____ days for suture removal.

Instructions continued on the reverse side of the page.

Wound Care Instructions continued:

Bruising

Bruising after a surgical excision is common, especially after facial surgery. Generally bruising is self-limited and heals within two weeks.

Bleeding

If bleeding occurs and soaks the dressing, apply firm pressure to the site using a stack of gauze pads (clean, folded, paper towels may also be used) for 10 minutes, timed by a clock, without letting off pressure to check the wound. If bleeding continues, repeat timed pressure for 20 minutes. If the wound is still bleeding, call Dr. Gerner at the numbers listed below, or go to an Urgent Care Center or Emergency Room.

Infection

It is normal to have mild tenderness of a wound. It is also normal to see redness of the skin up to a half-inch around the wound. This should slowly subside after a few days but up to two weeks. Signs of infection include:

- Pus coming from the wound
- Wound area is extremely tender to the touch
- A red streak on the skin appears near the wound
- Lymph glands swell and become tender
- Fever develops
- Wound becomes more painful or swollen more than two days after the procedure
- Redness and swelling is more than ½ inch around the wound

If any of these signs of infection occur, call Dr. Gerner at the numbers listed below, or go to an Urgent Care Center or Emergency Room.

Sutures Break or Come Loose

If the wound is still closed, i.e. the edges have not pulled apart, you should clean the skin around the wound, but NOT the wound itself, with alcohol and allow this to dry. Then, carefully apply a small amount (about ¼ inch wide) of petrolatum to the wound only. Finally, apply butterfly bandages or wound closure strips across the wound by pressing one end of the bandage on one side of the wound, holding it in place, and then pulling the skin to keep the wound closed and pressing the other end of the bandage onto the skin.

If a suture breaks or comes loose, or if the skin has pulled apart, call Dr. Gerner at the numbers listed below, or go to an Urgent Care Center or Emergency Room.

Complete Healing

An excision wound will take at least a year before its appearance is stable. To minimize scarring avoid exposing the skin to unprotected sunlight for at least six months.

Contact Information

If you have any complications, please call the office: 505-795-7735

If it is after office hours, call Dr. Grant Gerner's cell: 505-699-8063

Or you may call his wife/Office Manager, Wendy Gerner's cell: 505-699-8064

If you cannot reach Dr. Gerner and need immediate care, you should go to an Urgent Care Center or an Emergency Room.