

CENTRE ORAL & FACIAL SURGERY

GREG KEWITT DMD, MD, FACS

CARING FOR SKIN WOUNDS AND INCISIONS

Please read this handout carefully and keep it as a reference for after surgery. Every surgical procedure is different, so not all of the instructions may apply. Common sense will often dictate what you should do. When in doubt, or if you have any questions not addressed below, please do not hesitate to call.

Supplies you will need at home

- Cotton tip applicators (Q-tips, etc.)
- 3% hydrogen peroxide - *fresh bottle*
- Vaseline[®] or *plain* petroleum jelly (**Do not use antibiotic ointments such as Neosporin[®]**)

Wound Care

Mix 2 tablespoons 3% hydrogen peroxide with 2 tablespoons tap water in a small container. Use cotton tip applicators and the hydrogen peroxide solution to **gently** clean all blood and material from the incisions, sutures, and any abraded areas of skin. **Simply let the peroxide solution dissolve the crusts and gently work them loose with a Q-tip.** Do your best to **avoid disturbing the tissues** in the area of your surgery. Do not pick or pull at the scabs, crusts or loose tissue that may form.

After cleaning the area thoroughly, keep the wound lightly coated with **Vaseline[®]** or **petroleum jelly** at all times. Try not to leave any crusts or blood on the stitched areas or abraded skin – it is the most frequent cause of complication (e.g. excessive scarring, wound infection, and breakdown, etc.)

Bleeding and Hematomas

It is not unusual to have some mild, episodic oozing of blood from your wounds for 24 hours. If you experience bleeding, take some clean gauze and press directly on the wound for 20 minutes. If the wound is still bleeding, apply pressure for another 20 minutes. If this does not stop the bleeding call our office.

If you suspect that a **collection of blood under the skin** (i.e. hematoma or blood blister) has formed, call our office. If the hematoma remains small, the body will absorb it gradually. If it becomes larger, it may need to be removed by suction.

During the Healing Process

A low grade **fever** (99-101°) may develop. Extra strength Tylenol, two tablets every four hours, may be used. Avoid anti-inflammatory products such as Advil[®], Motrin[®], ibuprofen, etc.

The area may remain **numb** or be mildly **itchy**. You may also experience periodic discomfort around the wound as part of the healing process. The **edges of the wound will be pink and tender**. If the redness spreads from the edges outward and the wound becomes very tender or begins to drain pus, call our office immediately.

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Do's and Don'ts

- If **antibiotics** are prescribed, take the medication as directed. Complete the entire course of treatment. Antibiotics can produce several unwanted side effects including **gastrointestinal distress**, loose stools and in some rare cases, produce an **allergic skin reaction**. If you feel that you are having any of these reactions, please call our office.
- **Do not apply antibiotic ointments** (i.e. *Neosporin*[®]) that contain such compounds as *neomycin*, *bacitracin*, or *polymyxin*. Simply use **Vaseline**[®] or **petroleum jelly** as discussed above.
- **Do not** apply any bandages or other materials unless instructed to do so.
- **Do** follow the wound care instructions as described on the front of this page.
- **Do not smoke or use tobacco products.**
- Avoid **alcohol**, **anti-inflammatory medications** (Advil[®], Motrin[®], ibuprofen, etc.), and **herbal supplements** for two days after surgery as they can delay wound healing.
- **You may shower**, but be careful not to let water hit the wounds directly. Apply a small amount of Vaseline[®] or petroleum jelly to wounds and incisions to protect them from soaking prior to showering.
- To **minimize scarring and avoid pigment changes** (darkening), avoid sunlight or tanning for at least 3-4 months. Use sun protection of an SPF of 30 or greater when sun/UV exposure is anticipated.
- For one week, you should **keep vigorous physical activity to a minimum**. Light physical activity is OK the day following your surgery. If you are considering exercise, make sure that you are adequately hydrated and expect some throbbing. If bleeding or disturbance of the tissue occurs, exercising should be discontinued.

Please remember that your follow-up visits are very important.

Our 24 hour, 7 days a week contact number is 814-235-7700.

Our web site, centreoms.com, has additional information that you may find useful.