

Post Operative Wound Care Instructions

The importance of post operative care to your surgical site cannot be overstressed. The care that you take of yourself and your surgical wound is very important to the success of the procedure, and to your recovery and well being.

- **Bleeding:** The dressing you have on is a pressure dressing which will help to prevent bleeding. You may notice a small amount of blood on the edges of the dressing the first day; this is normal. To reduce the possibility of post-operative bleeding, please do the following:
 - 1) Limit activities for at least 24 hours
 - 2) Keep the operative site elevated
 - 3) If the surgery site is on the face, head, or neck, avoid stooping or bending, avoid straining to have a bowel movement, and sleep with your head elevated on extra pillow
 - 4) Keep the pressure dressing in place for 48 hours; if it loosens before then, re-tape it carefully

Should bleeding occur, apply firm constant pressure on the bandage for 20 minutes; that will usually stop minor bleeding. If bleeding persists, call the office; after hours call Dr. Berkes on her cell phone: 704-8094

- **Swelling:** Swelling occurs because surgery has caused a wound and your body reacts to that injury. To reduce the amount of swelling:
 - 1) Apply an ice pack for 20 minutes each hour during waking hours. If you do not have an ice pack, a bag of frozen peas or corn wrapped in a thin towel will work nicely; keep your bandage dry
- **Infection:** Signs of infection are: increased pain, swelling, redness, or yellowish drainage typically starting 3 to 7 days following surgery. To minimize risk of infection, follow these wound care instructions:
 - 1) Wash your hands with soap and water
 - 2) Wash the wound with soap and water
 - 3) Apply half and half solution of hydrogen peroxide and water to the wound with a cotton ball or Q-tip to remove crusts from the wound
 - 4) Dry thoroughly by blotting with a clean soft cloth
 - 5) Apply thin layer of antibiotic ointment with a Q-tip
 - 6) Cover with a clean non-stick dressing, particularly at night or if leaving home
 - 7)
- **Pain:** Pain, postoperatively, is generally mild. Extra-strength Tylenol, two tablets every four to six hours, usually relieves any pain you may have. Take Tylenol when the pain begins--do not wait until the pain is severe. Unless prescribed, avoid any aspirin or ibuprofen products, as they can increase the risk of bleeding.

You may bathe after surgery, but try to keep the pressure dressing dry for 48 hours. After 2 days, you may allow the wound to get wet, but do not let the forceful stream of the shower hit the wound directly.

The wound may be dark pink at first; this will decrease as healing progresses over several months. The area may remain numb for several weeks and even months. You may experience periodic pains or itching near the wound as it heals; this is normal. Lastly, if stitches were placed, be aware that it takes 4 to 6 months for the underneath layer of stitches to dissolve; until that time, the wound will look and feel a little bumpy, or ridged. Massage, over-the-counter silicone scar gel, and time will help the scar to settle. Rarely, if an underneath stitch doesn't dissolve, it will try to spit out through the surface; in that event, please call out office for evaluation.