

Post Operative Wound Care instructions

Following Excision of Skin lesions, Skin Grafting, or local reconstruction

All cuts made through the skin leave a scar but the majority of these fade with time and are difficult to see when they are fully healed.

Keeping the cut moist from Day 1 post op, using Vaseline, will allow it to heal rapidly. The scar is often raised and red at 2-3 weeks, then softens and fades over the course of a year. For best results we recommend the following regime.

Skin Graft Dressings

Small skin grafts may not require a pressure dressing; in this case please follow the instructions for wound care below.

Larger skin grafts require a pressure dressing to allow the graft to heal and receive nutrients from the underlying wound. It is important that any dressing that is sewn onto the skin is not tampered with prior to removal by your doctor. The edges of the dressing may be kept moist using Vaseline, which will help prevent any crusting of old blood that may accumulate.

Once the dressing is removed, you may follow the 'wound care' regime below.

Wound Care

1. Day 1-7; antibiotic ointment OR Vaseline multiple times daily; the cut should be protected from drying out at ALL TIMES
2. Day 7 - 21; Vaseline 3-4x daily along with massage to the scar
3. 3 weeks to 3 months; silicone gel or silicone sheet applied to the scar for minimum 12 hours daily. Initially it can make the scar a little more red, however silicon is proven to soften and fade the scar with regular use up to 3 months after the operation.
4. If there is any abnormal scarring (usually evident from the 4th week, talk to us about the use of injectable medications such as steroids that may improve scar appearance.
5. Scars are VERY sensitive to sunburn. Please ensure the wound is not exposed to the sun in the first month at all; following this it is safe to use sunscreen (minimum 30+) and/or a hat to prevent sunburn for the first year following the operation.

If the scar is exposed to sun, it may turn a dark colour - this process is irreversible.

What are the possible problems?

- Bleeding from the wound is not a common problem. If it does occur it usually occurs within the first 12 hours of surgery.
- Infection is uncommon but if your surgeon thinks it may happen to you a short course of antibiotics will be prescribed.

Will I have any activity restrictions?

- During this time you should avoid any strenuous activity, including exercise or heavy lifting. We do not encourage prolonged bed rest; rather you will feel better if you start walking around your home as soon as possible.
- Showering; don't let water touch the wound for 3 days after surgery; on Day 4 any tapes can come off and you can allow soap and water to run over the cut. It should then be gently patted dry with a clean towel before ointment/Vaseline is immediately reapplied.

When should I call my doctor?

- If you have increased redness, swelling or bruising.
- If you have persistent bleeding.
- If you have any side effects to medications; such as, rash, nausea, headache, vomiting, increased irritability, or constipation.
- If you have a fever (oral temperature over 38 degrees)

Who should I call if I have questions?

Depending on where you initially saw Dr Meller, you may call;

1. The rooms at SCENT, Frenchs Forest
49 Frenchs Forest Rd East
02 9451 9883
2. The rooms at 52 Denistone Rd, Denistone
[\(02\) 9874 0347](tel:0298740347)

OR; Prince of Wales Hospital on [\(02\) 9382 2222](tel:0293822222) ; please ask for the ENT registrar on call.

If you are concerned that you are experiencing an emergent problem, such as serious bleeding or difficulty breathing or swallowing, please call 000 or attend your nearest emergency department immediately.