

How to contact us

If you have any problems caring for your wound please call the dermatology clinic on 020 7288 5062, Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm

At other times please seek advice from your local GP or emergency department.

Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or whh-tr.whitthealthPALS@nhs.net

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please contact us on 020 7288 3182. We will try our best to meet your needs.

Whittington Health NHS Trust
Magdala Avenue
London
N19 5NF
Phone: 020 7272 3070
www.whittington.nhs.uk

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Looking after your wound following skin surgery with stitches

A patient's guide



This leaflet aims to answer any questions you may have after your skin surgery.

The dressing

Keep your dressing in place and dry for two days. After two days you may shower as normal. Remove the wet dressing, and clean the wound gently with soap. Lightly pat dry the wound and then apply a thin layer of Vaseline® ointment. This will help keep the wound moist and allow it to heal faster with less scarring. A waterproof plaster can be re-applied if necessary. Repeat this routine on a daily basis until the stitches are removed. In some instances you will be asked to leave the dressing on for longer.

Showering/bathing

After two days you may shower as normal. During the first two days you can wash but keep the dressing dry. Do not soak the wound in the bath until the stitches have been removed.

Removal of stitches

Please make an appointment with your practice nurse to remove your stitches.

You can make a note of your appointment here:

Paper strips – You can remove these when your dressing is removed. They are easier to remove when wet.

Some stitches are dissolvable and will disappear by themselves in a few weeks. You will be advised if this is the case.

Bleeding

Slight oozing or spotting of blood on the dressing is normal. However, If you experience heavy bleeding, apply firm, continual pressure to the area for 20 minutes. This will usually stop the bleeding. If bleeding persists please contact the dermatology department or your GP for advice.

Pain

The local anaesthetic will usually wear off in one or two hours. If you are in pain we recommend you take paracetamol as instructed by the doctor or nurse. It is best to avoid ibuprofen and other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatories (NSAIDs) as pain killers as they can enhance bleeding. Do not stop your aspirin or other blood thinning drugs unless instructed by your doctor.

Infection

We take every precaution to prevent a wound infection before, during and after your procedure. Despite this, some wounds will still become infected. Symptoms include an unpleasant smell, discharge, fever, pain, swelling and redness. If this occurs please contact your GP.

General information

Swelling and bruising - This may occur, especially if you have had surgery around the face and eyes. This can take 10-14 days to start reducing. If swelling occurs then resting and sleeping on an extra pillow can help the swelling reduce.

Smoking - Smoking affects wound healing. You are advised to stop or reduce your smoking for the duration of healing.

Scarring - You should avoid physical activities that put a strain on the scar for two or three weeks. After the stitches have been removed, massage the scar gently with a moisturiser to help it settle.

Numbness - A numb sensation around the scar can occur and usually improves with time.

If you have not heard from us about your biopsy results within six weeks, please contact the department on 020 7288 5062