
Excision Postoperative Instructions

Most dermatologic surgery is uneventful with very few complications. The major risks include postoperative bleeding, bruising, or infection, but these are uncommon. Pain is not abnormal but is usually tolerable. If further questions arise, please call us early rather than let concerns worsen.

Pain Management

- Pain is generally well controlled with Tylenol. Avoid aspirin, ibuprofen, or NSAIDs — these can increase the risk of bleeding or bruising. If you believe you will need additional pain medication, please let us know promptly.

Infection Watch

- Infections rarely occur but are most likely within the first few days. Signs include redness, swelling, increasing pain, tenderness, or drainage at the wound site. Fever is possible but not common. Call our staff or Dr. McLain if you have concerns.

Dressing Care

- Dressings are usually left in place for at least 48–72 hours. If a bandage comes off prematurely, clean with mild soap and water, apply Vaseline or Aquaphor, and redress.
- Topical antibiotics can substitute for emollients, however there is a higher risk of contact allergy with prolonged use.
- After removing the initial dressing, clean and re-dress the site every 1–2 days or after showering. Dressings can be covered with plastic wrap taped in place if bathing is needed.

Activity Restrictions

- Use caution with heavy physical activity for 2 weeks. Avoid lifting more than 20 lbs while sutures are in place.
- Avoid activities that cause flushing or heavy lifting, especially if the procedure occurred on the head or neck.
- Skin takes up to 2 months to regain its initial strength — continue to limit physical exertion to ensure optimal outcomes.

Open Wound Care (If Not Repaired)

- Keep pressure on the wound minimal, limit physical activity, and keep the surgical site elevated with the dressing in place.
- If bleeding occurs, apply direct pressure for 20–30 minutes. Contact the office immediately while applying pressure.

Suture Removal Timeline

- **Scalp:** 7–10 days
- **Face & neck:** 5–7 days
- **Trunk & arms:** 10–14 days | **Legs:** 14 days

Contact Us

- **Gig Harbor:** 253-851-7733 | **Silverdale:** 360-698-6859 | **Tacoma:** 253-752-2273
- **After hours (Dr. McLain):** 281-705-8094