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## WOUND CARE AFTER SURGERY

After the surgery a dressing will be covering the wound. I would suggest keeping the wound **dry** and **covered** for **48 hours**, but if the dressing is firmly stuck it is ok to leave it on longer. After 3 or 4 days a dressing is not normally required.

Although you won't be sent home with a **bleeding** wound, occasionally minor oozing or bleeding may occur later. This can be usually be controlled by **pressing firmly** on the wound for 15 minutes. If the dressing gets soggy, it may need to be replaced.

Avoid **strenuous exercise, bending or heavy lifting** for a few days after surgery. They can cause bleeding into the wound, or splitting of the stitches.

If the wound is **painful**, paracetamol 4-6 hourly usually helps. The discomfort should rapidly improve over the next few days. Rarely, it doesn't, and becomes more painful - you may have got an **infection** requiring treatment with antibiotics, normally available from your GP.

If possible, **avoid smoking** totally for the first week after surgery. Studies have shown that wound healing is significantly affected by smoking, and the infection rate is higher.

### DAILY WOUND CARE AFTER THE DRESSING IS REMOVED:

- Wash your hands.
- Wash the wound carefully with clean water.
- Try and gently remove any dried blood or scabs.
- Use cotton buds or cotton pads for delicate areas.
- Pat the wound dry and cover it thickly with Vaseline or antibiotic ointment. The ointment will keep the wound clean, soft and moist.

### STITCHES:

You have \_\_\_\_\_ stitches which need removing by \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ days

### RESULTS:

- Normally results take 2 – 3 weeks to come back from the laboratory. You may be given a follow-up appointment to discuss these. For more minor procedures, you may receive the results in the post. This letter can take several weeks to arrive.
- Sometimes, a second procedure may be required, depending on the results.

### LONG TERM EXPECTATIONS:

- The scar will be very red and firm at first but will settle down.
- The area around your wound may be numb for several weeks or months
- You may feel occasional sharp pains or 'twinges' near the scar as it settles.  
The skin won't regain full strength for several months.