
Care for your wounds

Frequently Asked Questions

Wound care is an important part of the post-operative aftercare. Wound care is important to prevent infection and to provide healing without scar formation.

All abdominal skin wounds will have been closed with either skin staples or with dissolvable sutures beneath the skin known as subcuticular sutures. A dry dressing (comfeel) will also have been placed on the wound. The dressing is designed to keep the wound clean until it closes. This reduces the risk of infection. Dressings also prevent the wound sticking to undergarments. Some dressings have additional properties that can improve the rate and quality of skin healing.

The dry dressing may need to be reapplied until the wound is closed and dry. If the dressing becomes moist or dirty it will need to be changed but otherwise leave the dressing intact and remove in the shower on day 7-10. The dry dressing is usually required for 7-10 days. These dressings are not waterproof so cover the dressing with a plastic protector to prevent them from becoming wet in the shower.

Skin staples are usually removed on post operative day 5. They are usually removed prior to discharge. Otherwise arrangements will need to be made to have them removed by your family doctor. Once the staples are removed they are usually replaced by an adhesive skin suture known as steri-strips or butterfly sutures. The steri-strips help the wound edges close, If they become moist they may become loose. Should this happen remove the steri strips clean the wound with saline or chlorhexidine solution and dry gauze squares and reapply new steri strips. A dry dressing is not usually placed over the steri-strips as the skin bridges have formed at this stage and the wound is closed. If required however it is still possible to place a dry dressing over the steri-strips.

Subcuticular stitches as opposed to skin staples are usually self dissolving and do not need to be removed.

Once a wound is dry and skin bridges have formed no further dressings are required. Moisturising cream can help keep the wound supple but only apply once the new skin has formed and the wound is dry.

If the wound becomes red, painful, or develops a purulent discharge please contact Dr Campbell or your family doctor as you might have a wound infection. Wound infections may need treatment with antibiotics.

Circumcision wounds take up to 2 weeks to heal and during that time will need ointment to be applied until healed. Vaseline petroleum jelly or chloromycetin eye ointment are the two most commonly used. Occasionally a dry absorbent dressing may also be required if weeping. This can be removed daily in the shower and reapplied after the ointment has been applied. The ointment should be applied twice daily, and then the dressing if required. Wear tight supportive underwear.

Care for your wounds continued...

Who can I contact for more help or information?

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If you wish to retain a copy for you own records, one will be provided.

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Signature

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