



Columbia University Medical Center  
New York Presbyterian Hospital  
Department of Dermatology  
*Division of Dermatologic Surgery  
and Cutaneous Oncology*



**Désirée Ratner, M.D.**

**Director**

*Unit for Dermatologic Surgery  
and Cutaneous Oncology  
Mohs Micrographic Surgery  
Laser Surgery*

## **WOUND CARE INSTRUCTIONS – SUTURED WOUND**

### **WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER SURGERY**

Discomfort after your surgery is usually minimal. Tylenol or Extra Strength Tylenol, two tablets every four hours, should help to relieve any pain that you may have.

To lessen the discomfort, reduce swelling, and minimize bruising, an ice pack may be applied over the dressing every 2-3 hours for 20 minutes until bedtime. Elevation of the wound area is also helpful.

A pressure dressing has been applied to your wound to prevent bleeding and minimize swelling. You may notice a small amount of blood on the edges of the dressing which is normal. If bleeding persists and soils the dressing, apply firm and constant pressure over the dressing with gauze for 15 minutes, if the bleeding still persists, repeat the pressure for an additional 15 minutes.

In rare instances, if bleeding persists, call our office at **212-305-3625** between 9:00 am and 5:00pm weekdays.

**IN CASE OF EMERGENCY** - After 5:00pm or on weekends or holidays please call 1-800-488-3468 and describe the nature of the emergency to the answering service. If necessary you can go to the emergency room or to your primary physician.

### **CHANGING THE DRESSING**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Peroxide
- \_\_\_\_\_ Normal saline
- \_\_\_\_\_ Q-tips
- \_\_\_\_\_ Gauze sponges
- \_\_\_\_\_ Telfa or non-stick dressing
- \_\_\_\_\_ Band-aids
- \_\_\_\_\_ Paper or plastic tape
- \_\_\_\_\_ Polysporin, plain Bacitracin, Bactroban (ointment only), or Vaseline
- \_\_\_\_\_ Xeroform petrolatum dressing

**Wound Care Instructions – Sutured Wound**  
**Department of Dermatology**  
**Désirée Ratner, M.D.**

- The first dressing change should begin approximately \_\_\_\_\_ hours after the dressing was applied.
- Get bandage wet.
- Gently remove the old dressing.
  1. Moisten a cotton swab (Q-Tip) and gently roll it over the wound with a slightly downward pressure
  2. Swabs will be needed to properly clean the site
  3. Pat and dry wound with a dry gauze pad
  4. Using a swab – apply a thin layer of antibiotic ointment to the wound
  5. **Only if directed**, apply a xeroform petrolatum dressing.
  6. Cover the wound with a non-stick dressing and paper tape as instructed.
  7. Follow this procedure twice daily, every day until sutures are removed, unless otherwise instructed

**DURING THE HEALING PROCESS**

Upon removing the initial dressing you may shower and allow the wound to get wet; however, do not allow the forceful stream of the water to hit the wound directly.

If the wound is in your scalp, you may wash you hair with a baby shampoo to avoid any irritation.

Avoid aspirin, and aspirin products. Avoid alcohol for 2 days after surgery.

**During the healing process:**

1. It is normal for the edges of the wound to be pink and slightly tender to the touch.
2. You may experience mild itching and periodic discomfort around the wound.
3. It is not uncommon to have numbness in the area surrounding the surgical site.
4. If the wound becomes red, hot, or painful to the touch, call our office immediately.

**After Healing:**

1. Make certain that you apply a sunscreen of at least a # 30 SPF whenever you go outside.
2. Please remember that your follow-up visits are very important.