

Patient Information Leaflet

Post-operative advice following dermatology skin surgery

The following advice will help you to know what to expect after your skin surgery procedure.

Will I have a dressing?

You will usually have a dressing which may vary in size depending on the type of surgery you have had. You will be asked to keep this in place for the first 48 hours after your surgery and to keep it dry.

Will I have local anaesthetic?

You will have local anaesthetic administered in the form of an injection to make the area numb. If the lip or nose area has been numbed, please be careful, do not drink anything hot or very cold (i.e. ice lolly from freezer) until the feeling has returned.

How long will the wound be painful for?

You will be given a local anaesthetic injection prior to your surgical procedure to numb the skin. The effect of this will wear off gradually over about an hour. If you feel any pain or discomfort at the site of operation after the anaesthetic has worn off, you may take your preferred pain killer. Paracetamol is usually adequate. Do not take aspirin unless you are already taking this for other medical reasons.

What happens if my wound starts to bleed?

It is normal for a small amount of blood to come through the dressing, but if it does not stop and the dressing becomes saturated, you should press firmly over the dressing for 10 to 15 minutes. This is usually enough to stop any bleeding.

What about the risk of infection?

Signs that your wound may have become infected usually begin 48 hours after your surgery. You would notice the following:

- Increased redness around the wound
- Becoming more painful; even after taking pain killers
- Feels hot and throbs
- May leak, ooze or start to bleed again
- You may feel generally unwell

If you experience any of the above, contact your GP or GP out-of-hours service.

Cosmetics must not be applied over a wound until completely healed.

When can I bath/shower?

You will be asked to keep the wound and dressing dry for two days. You can then take a bath or shower as normal after that. Dry the area by patting rather than rubbing it.

When will the stitches be removed?

Stitches have to be left in for different periods of time, depending on the circumstances. You will have been told when they need to come out. The stitches will be removed by your GP practice nurse. Certain types of stitches do not need to be removed – you will be advised if these stitches are used to close your wound and they will eventually dissolve; this can take several weeks.

If the stitches come out before they are due to be removed or if the wound opens up, please contact ID Medical Minor Surgery.

If paper strips (steri-strips) have been used to cover the stitches, it is best not to wet them. This causes them to come off. To promote healing and moisturise the scar once the stitches have been removed, apply a thin layer of soft paraffin ointment (i.e. Vaseline) along the scar each day. Please use a new pot or tube of Vaseline to prevent contamination of the wound.

Will I have a scar?

Almost all procedures will leave a scar of some sort. This is most pronounced in the first weeks following surgery, after which it will fade but not disappear.

Some individuals can develop thickened (keloid) scars. This is most likely to occur on the chest and back. Stretching of scars can also occur at these and other sites, though this will be minimised if you rest the area for several weeks following surgery. It can take up to a year until the final scar result is reached.

What can I do to support healing?

Vaseline (use a new pot) should be applied to the wound twice a day to keep it moist and encourage good healing.

What other things should I be aware of?

If you have had surgery to the face, you may experience some numbness around the wound for a few months. You may get some bruising, especially if around the eyes. This is all part of the normal healing process.

When will I get my results?

The lesion (piece of skin), which has been removed will be sent to the Pathology Department to be assessed. You will be informed whether a further appointment may be necessary or your doctor will write to you and your GP. The results will be sent to you by the preferred method of communication – SMS, Email or letter in the post, or you will be booked in for an appointment.

ID Medical Minor Surgery Service Contact Details

Telephone: 01473 927550 email: MOService@id-medical.com

Office Hours: 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday

If you have any concerns, contact your GP or GP out-of-hours service.