

WOUND CARE

Please leave the wound dressing on for 48 hours, trying not to get it wet during that time. The wound is less likely to bleed if it has been kept dry and covered for 48 hours. If the dressing falls off, either reapply a new dressing or put additional gauze and tape over the existing dressing. It is always a good idea to keep plenty of wound dressing materials around the house.

If the wound begins to bleed, hold pressure for 10 to 15 minutes and reinforce the dressing with additional gauze and tape. If the wound continues to bleed despite these measures, please call our office at (828) 697-1170. Dr. Cohen is available 24/7 to handle this type of problem. In the unlikely event that the bleeding is brisk and Dr. Cohen is not immediately available, get attention at the nearest emergency room.

After 48 hours, the dressing may be removed and the wound gently cleaned with mild soap and water. Do not apply an antibiotic ointment unless it has been specifically prescribed by Dr. Cohen. Most over-the-counter antibiotic ointments are likely to do more harm than good. It is best to keep the wound covered with a dressing for at least another 3 to 5 days. If you are tolerating the dressing without any irritation from the tape, keep it covered for up to 1 to 2 weeks. This is recommended if you will be sweating or if you will be exposed to dirt. If your skin becomes irritated by the adhesive tape, then it may be necessary to leave the wound uncovered. If you do have a reaction to the adhesive tape, contact Dr. Cohen for treatment. Other suggestions for those who are sensitive to adhesive tape include using paper tape or wrapping the area if possible with Coban self-adherent cohesive wrap.

Open wounds normally heal in 3 to 6 weeks, however it may take twice as long if the wound is on the calf. Stitched wounds heal in two weeks, but are not fully bonded for another month. Sutures should be removed in 7 to 14 days, and this is done at no charge by our office.

Most wounds develop some redness along their perimeter. It is normal to see an area of redness extending approximately $\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch around the cut. Call Dr. Cohen if the redness is splotchy and extends more than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch around the incision and is associated with pain. While wound infections are uncommon, it is best to treat them as soon as possible.

Biopsy reports should be available in 3 to 4 days, however sometimes it may take up to a week. We contact every patient with their report, whether there is a problem or not. Please call us if you have not heard from us within a week. Do not assume everything is okay just because you have not heard from us.

Written August 7, 2016
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