



Home Care for Wounds – Open and Closed with Sutures

- 1) The bandage placed at the time of surgery can be left on up to 48-72 hours, and pressure dressings should be left on this long. It should be changed early if the wound becomes dry, or if it leaks.
- 2) The wound can be cleaned once to twice a day with warm water and soap, and an ointment applied to the wound.
- 3) Wounds heal quicker and better if they are kept lubricated and not allowed to dry out. Good ointments are Aquaphor Healing Ointment or Vaseline Petroleum Jelly. Antibiotic ointments aren't needed unless there is an infection, or likelihood of infection. Your provider will direct you on whether or not you need to use an antibiotic ointment.
- 4) Polysporin is the one we would recommend because this has a lower likelihood of an allergic reaction than Neosporin or Bacitracin. If you have a reaction to one of these ointments, you will likely notice redness itchiness in the area you apply the ointment.
- 5) Hydrogen peroxide can loosen up dried debris and help kill infections, but it can also slow wound healing and we don't recommend it on a regular basis.
- 6) If the wound has debris or dried blood that doesn't come off easily, this can be loosened up with continued application of an ointment, or you can use a white vinegar solution. This can be prepared by adding 1-2 teaspoons of white vinegar to a cup of water. Use a cotton ball and hold it on the wound for 3-5 minutes and soak twice daily. Allow to dry before applying the ointment.
- 7) If the wound is clean, soap and water is all that is needed to clean the area. Dry the area by gently patting the wound, then apply an ointment and cover with a band aid or a non-stick pad like Telfa or Adaptic. This is to be continued until the wound has healed.
- 8) For bleeding, apply local pressure for 10 minutes, up to 20 if there is lots of bleeding. If the wound is on the head or neck, please sit up. If it's on an extremity, please elevate the arm or leg. If this doesn't work or if there is a lot of bleeding, please go to emergency room.
- 9) For wounds with sutures, the sutures should be taken out when recommended by your provider. Taking them out too soon may cause the wound to open up, leaving them too long can increase your chance of scarring.
- 10) Open wounds can take up to 4 weeks for complete healing. The scalp can take longer, up to 8 weeks to heal. Wounds heal better when they are kept lubricated, such as when they are covered with ointment and band aid. After the area is healed on the surface, it will remain discolored or reddened for several months.
- 11) Scarring can occur with either type of wound. Sometimes the scar may be thick and hard, or become raised up. Scar tissue can squeeze the nerves and make the area itch or hurt. Firm massage of the scar for 5-10 seconds, repeated many times during the day (10 times a day is ok, 40 times a day is good) can help break up the scar tissue which helps relieve and discomfort you're having, as well as help the color return to normal quicker.

If you have questions, please call the office. If you have an emergency, please go to the emergency room at the hospital.