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## WOUND CARE INSTRUCTIONS AFTER SKIN BIOPSY OR SURGERY

- Keep the area dry for at least 24 hours, although 48 hours is better. After 48 hours you **MUST** wash the area daily with soap and water (if you have a beige outer bandage remove it at this time without removing the steri-strips underneath). Avoid immersing the incision in ocean or swimming pool or jacuzzi water for 2 weeks.
- If you have Steri-Strips, allow for them to fall off naturally. If they fall off in less than 10 days start applying antibiotic ointment (e.g. Fucidin, Bactroban, Polysporin) or Vaseline ointment 2-4 times per day till 10 days post-procedure.
- You should also cover the treated area if you will be in dirty environment or if there is a chance the wound will be injured or traumatized (e.g. at work, under clothing that is rubbing, playing sports, etc).
- If there is excessive bleeding, apply pressure for 20 minutes uninterrupted. If bleeding fails to stop, contact the Toronto Dermatology Centre. If it is after hours or weekend, go to nearest walk-in clinic, GP or Emergency Room.
- Do not pick off scabs - new ones will form if the old ones are removed too soon and it increased the possibility of scarring. Don't scrub or rub the wound until it heals.
- Activity: avoid any activity or movement that may cause the wound to stretch or place tension on the wound for 2-3 weeks. This will help prevent the wound from opening and will result in a finer, less visible scar that is less prone to widening over time. Sutured scar lines do not reach their full strength for 6 weeks. Once the stitches are removed the wound is no longer supported so to avoid stretching the scar, avoid movements which stretch across the suture line. In a small percentage of cases the suture site can open. This is no cause for concern but please start applying antibiotic ointment 2-3 times per day until the wound closes. This can take 1-2 weeks. Please note we will not re-stich a procedure site that has opened as that would increase the chance of an infection occurring.
- Make-up/hair colour: don't apply make-up to your wound until the skin has healed over and there is no scab (e.g. no sooner than 2 weeks). Don't apply make-up over stitches. If the procedure site is on your scalp, avoid colouring your hair until the area has healed.
- If you notice signs of infection which include: redness extending well beyond the surgery site, swelling, increasing pain, fever or sweats, odour, or pus draining from the site, please contact your family doctor or the nurse at the Toronto Dermatology Centre at 416-633-0001 x 3, or send pictures to [nurse@torontodermatologycentre.com](mailto:nurse@torontodermatologycentre.com).
- Non-dissolvable stitches should be removed after \_\_\_\_\_ days.
  - Note that dissolvable stitches (clear colour, similar to fishing line) can take anywhere from 2-4+ weeks to completely dissolve on their own.

Appointment date: \_\_\_\_\_

- If concerned about scar appearance, we recommend Stratamed or SkinMedica's Scar Recovery Gel. Stratamed can be used immediately after suture removal, and will help heal and minimize scarring. SkinMedica Scar Recovery Gel will work on the texture and colour of the scar, and can be applied 3 weeks post procedure. Ask our medical estheticians or receptionists which one is best for you.
- Pathology reports can take 3-4 weeks and you are **only** contacted if results indicate that further follow-up is required.
- All these instructions can be found on our website at [www.torontodermatologycentre.com](http://www.torontodermatologycentre.com)