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Post-Op Instructions for Surgical Excisions

- 1) Dressings: Do not remove the dressing or tape until the instructed time.
- 2) Bathing: Surgical areas without dressings or areas dressed with steri-strip tape can generally be washed after 48 hours. Scalp incisions can be wet after 24 hours and then the hair can be gently shampooed. If more extensive dressings are placed over an incision, they should not be removed for bathing until specifically instructed. Please try to keep all dressings dry.
- 3) Bleeding: You should expect a few drops of blood at the site of surgery as the local anesthetic wears off. Applying pressure is helpful but a scant amount of bleeding is normal and acceptable. If a steady or significant amount of bleeding occurs after pressure is applied, please call the office immediately.
- 4) Swelling: Swelling may occur, especially in surgery of facial areas. Swelling may occur in the face for several days after surgery with procedures to the scalp or forehead. You are encouraged to use ice packs for the first 24 hours, 20 minutes of every hour on the day of the surgery until you go to bed. This will reduce swelling, decrease excessive bruising and help manage pain.
- 5) Bruising: Bruising at the site of surgery is more significant with surgery around the eyes and increases for a day or two after surgery before it will begin to subside. Bruising may take from 5 to 14 days to disappear entirely. If surgery is done on the forehead or near an eye, bruising may appear around the eye for several days later.
- 6) Medications: In general, small surgical procedures have very little pain. You may be given a prescription for pain medication. If so, take only as directed and not on a regular basis unless absolutely necessary. You may also be given an antibiotic after surgery. If so, it should be taken exactly as directed until completely gone. No further antibiotic is necessary unless specifically ordered.
 - Vaseline is recommended twice daily until the wound is healed and the stitches, if present, are removed.
 - Vaseline may be purchased over the counter at your pharmacy.
(If you have an allergy to Vaseline, you may use plain Vaseline instead.)
- 7) Sutures: Sutures are removed from the face after 4 to 7 days. Sutures are removed from other areas of the body from 7 to 14 days after surgery. Tape or steri-strips may be re-applied for varying periods of time (depending on each circumstance) after surgery to provide the most optimal wound healing. After the steri-strips are removed or 2 to 3 days after sutures are removed, you may begin applying Vitamin E to the wound to promote better healing. The incision line might be slightly red and prominent for several weeks after surgery and then gradually fade over a period of 3 to 6 months.

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