

## POST-OPERATIVE WOUND CARE (for wounds with stitches)

### 1. **SUPPLIES-** You will need to purchase or have on hand the following:

- Tap water and mild liquid soap (1 squirt of soap mixed with a cup of lukewarm tap water)
- Q-tips
- Vaseline
- Non-adherent gauze and surgical tape or Band-Aids

**START CARE:** \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. **WOUND CARE**

- A. Clean wound two times daily beginning 48 hours after surgery.
- B. Clean wound with Q-tips soaked in tap water/soap mixture. Do not reuse Q-tips. Remove all crusted material and any white/yellow material that can come off easily.
- C. After cleaning, apply Vaseline directly to the non-adherent gauze or Band-aid with a clean Q-tip. Then secure the bandage to the wound.
- D. Cover your wound with the following dressing:
  - Non-adherent gauze cut to the size of the wound and then tape or
  - Band-Aids
- E. Continue wound care until stitches are removed or as your doctor directs.
- F. For the first 2 days, try not to bend over at the hips to pick things up (instead go down on one knee or have someone help you) as this may increase blood pressure to the head which may increase your chances of bleeding.
- G. **If you have absorbable sutures, continue wound care for 12 days. If the absorbable sutures are not dissolving and breaking up after 5 days, you may use Q-tips soaked in hydrogen peroxide to dissolve them faster.**
- H. **If you were told to return for suture removal, please continue with wound care until your appointment.**

### 3. **PERSONAL HYGIENE**

In the first 48 hours, showers or baths are allowed if the bandage remains dry. After 48 hours, the sutures (stitches) may get wet. However, do not immerse them in bath water. Swimming is not allowed until the sutures are removed. You should avoid heavy lifting and exercise until the sutures are removed or as approved by the doctor.

### 4. **MEDICATIONS**

Unless the doctor states otherwise, take Tylenol (acetaminophen/APAP) according to the package directions for pain as needed. If you are having pain that is not controlled by Tylenol, a prescription pain reliever may be given. Do not take both acetaminophen /APAP and the prescription pain reliever because the prescription has the acetaminophen in it too. You should take one or the other. If you are prescribed an antibiotic, please take it as directed until you have finished all of the pills, unless you are not tolerating it for some reason. Please contact the office if you are not tolerating the medication. To reduce any swelling, use ice 10 minutes out of every hour for a maximum of two days.

Alcohol should be avoided for at least 3 days after surgery.

If you are a smoker it is important to **STOP SMOKING** for at least 3 weeks after the surgery, as this can cause the wound to heal poorly. If a flap has been performed smoking can “kill” the tissue.

### 5. **CONTACT THE DOCTOR IF THE FOLLOWING OCCURS:**

- A. If your bandage is saturated with blood (spotting of dressing is expected), please remove the bandage. To stop the bleeding hold direct pressure over a clean dressing for 20 minutes (without peeking). If the wound is still bleeding repeat the process.
- B. Temperature greater than 100 degrees F or 38 degrees C.
- C. Signs of infection, i.e., redness, swelling, pus, or increased pain or heat.

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A PHYSICIAN CAN BE REACHED AT 704-295-0000 during office hours. If you have an emergency related to your surgery after office hours, please call 704-295-0000 and follow instructions for reaching the doctor on call.

### **What can I expect after surgery?**

- 1. Redness:** This is normal up to a ¼ inch around the wound. This redness can be persistent, fading over several months. If the redness starts spreading beyond what is to be expected please contact the doctor.
- 2. Swelling:** The wound will seem “puffy” or swollen on and around the wound. Also, at the ends, there will be some puffiness. This swelling should be soft. This is normal. Due to trauma to the area, other areas may swell as well. This may last several days. The most common places for swelling are the eyes, nose, lips and legs. The application of ice, for 10 min per hour, to these areas may help. If the swelling becomes hard and/or painful this could be a hematoma (collection of blood under the sutures). Please contact the doctor if this occurs.
- 3. Spotting:** Blood spotting on the bandage is normal. Blood soaking the bandage is not normal. If blood is soaking the bandage please refer to # 5 on the front of the wound care sheet.
- 4. Sutures:** If you have absorbable sutures, they should start to dissolve between 5 and 7 days. They should be fully dissolved around 12 days. If you have non-absorbable sutures, you can expect spotting up to two days after suture removal.

### **Common Drug Side Effects**

#### **PAIN MEDICATIONS:**

**HYDROCODONE 5/325 MG AP/PAP:** Nausea, Vomiting, Dizziness, Drowsiness

This medication should be taken with food in your stomach. Do not drive or do anything that may require your concentration while taking this medication.

#### **ANTIBIOTICS:**

**CEPHALEXIN, CIPROFLOXACIN, DOXYCYCLINE:**

Diarrhea, nausea, & vomiting may occasionally occur after taking these antibiotics.

These medications can be taken with food in your stomach.

In some cases, while taking ciprofloxacin, you can experience tendonitis (sore tendons), especially the Achilles tendon (heel). If you are experiencing this, please stop the medication and call the office.

Doxycycline should not be taken at the same time as milk products or anything with calcium (i.e. vitamins)

**For further information about these drugs or the interactions with your current medications please consult your pharmacist and the medication handout they provide you with.**