



WACCAMAW DERMATOLOGY

— Skin Cancer Institute —

Phone: (843) 449-0453 Fax: (843) 449-9531
www.waccamawdermatology.com

Granulating Wounds (Wounds that heal on their own)

Wound Care

Leave the pressure dressing on for 48 hours and keep it dry.

- Pressure dressings are intentionally tight to decrease bleeding and swelling.
- When you remove the pressure dressing, gently clean the area with soap and water.
- DO NOT scrub the area, and DO NOT allow the shower pressure to hit the area directly.
- Apply the ointment provided in your wound care bag to the surgical site **twice daily** for at least 3 weeks or until fully healed. This will prevent a thick and crusty scab from forming.

Wounds that are kept moist heal faster and leave a better scar than wounds that are left dry.

- Do NOT use any antibacterial ointment unless instructed by your physician.
- It may be okay to keep the wound open to air while at home. Please cover the wound when you leave your home as it could be exposed to dust or dirt (e.g. while outdoors).
- If you prefer to keep the wound covered, you can cover the plain petrolatum with non-adhesive or non-stick gauze and secure it with paper tape. If on your legs, you can avoid using any tape or adhesive, and instead use a sock, stocking, or elastic wrap to keep the gauze in place.

Always practice good hand hygiene → wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water before changing the dressing or touching your wound to apply plain petrolatum.

Pain:

Apply ice packs for 5-10 minutes several times a day 1-2 days after surgery to reduce swelling.

Elevate the surgical site as much as possible to minimize swelling.

- If you had surgery on your head or neck, relaxing in a recliner or sleeping with extra pillows to prop you up may be helpful.
- If you had surgery on a leg, in addition to elevation, your doctor may recommend compression stockings when you are on your feet.

For pain/discomfort, we recommend acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil).

- You may take up to 2 extra strength acetaminophen (1000mg) and repeat every 8 hours. If you need pain relief in between, you can take 4 ibuprofen tablets (800mg) with food, and repeat every 8 hours.
- **Do not exceed 3000 mg of acetaminophen or 2400mg of ibuprofen in a 24-hour period!**
- For any non-resolving pain, contact your provider.

Optimal Healing:

Avoid ANY strenuous activity (heavy lifting, bending over, or exercise) for 2-7 days to minimize bleeding risk. Avoid smoking for at least 3 weeks as it leads to poor wound healing and scarring. It is best to stop smoking overall.



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What should you expect...

Initially:

- **Bruising, swelling, and some pain** are expected after surgery. These will typically resolve in 1-2 weeks. Wounds on the hand, legs, and feet may take even longer to improve.
- The more active you are, the more the wound is likely to swell and cause pain.
- Your wound may feel **tight, itchy, or numb**. This should gradually improve over several months.
- You may notice small amounts of clear or golden-tinged drainage from the wound until the wound is fully healed. This drainage is normal.
- Some wounds can take up to 3 months to heal.

Long-Term:

- In terms of your final scar, everyone is different and follows a different time course of wound healing. It may take up to **6-12 months to see what the final scar** will look like.
- If you have any questions/concerns, discuss them with your provider. He may make some recommendations to help with the final scar appearance.

What should you do if you experience...

Bleeding:

- The pressure dressing over your wound helps to stop bleeding. Any bleeding that you notice can usually easily be stopped with direct firm pressure. **DO NOT** remove the dressing, elevate the site and apply **constant pressure** over the dressing for 20 minutes without peeking.
- If the pressure dressing becomes completely saturated with blood or if you experience active bleeding that does not resolve with 20 minutes of pressure, **call your provider immediately**.

Concerns for infection:

- Wounds that heal without stitches are actually less likely to become infected, as bacterial overgrowth is able to drain out of the wound without build up.
- If you experience signs of infection such as fever, chills, sweats, increased redness, swelling, warmth, thick/yellow drainage or worsening pain to touch, call your provider immediately.
- Some redness immediately around the healing wound is normal and expected.

