

Feedback

Comments and suggestions that give us feedback on our practice, e.g. delays in wound healing, pain or dressing problems, (and the good things as well) are helpful. Please contact the Dermatology Specialist Nurse using the phone numbers or email address given on the back of this leaflet.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask a member of the nursing or medical staff, or call the Dermatology/Skin Cancer Specialist Nurse:

Mihaela Savu

Tel: 01935 384906

Mobile: 07990 776684

or email: mihaela.savu@ydh.nhs.uk

Plastics Secretary

Tel: 01935 384887

Dermatology Secretary

Tel: 01935 384871

We would like to thank the Royal Devon & Exeter NHS Foundation trust for allowing us to use the information given in this leaflet.

Patient Information

Care of your stitched wound after your

Dermatology & Plastic Surgery

Relief of pain

The local anaesthetic that you have had will wear off the next 1 to 2 hours. You may need to take simple pain relief, e.g. paracetamol (as directed on the manufacturer's packet) to cover the next 12 to 24 hours. Aspirin should be avoided as it increases your risk of post-operative bleeding. Check with your GP if you have been prescribed other analgesia.

Bleeding

The operation site will be checked for bleeding before you leave the department. If bleeding occurs at home, do not disturb the dressing. Apply a pad to the area. Do not lift the pad from the wound for a full 10 minutes. If possible, elevate or raise the area, e.g. arm or leg. If bleeding persists you will need to visit your **practice nurse** or local **Emergency Department** for assessment. A clean dressing will be provided once bleeding has settled if this is necessary.

Be vigilant for bleeding if you take anticoagulants, e.g. Aspirin or Warfarin.

Remember to take your 'practice nurse letter' with you when you go to see the practice nurse.

Stitches

Stitches or sutures will normally be removed (after 5 to 14 days) at your own surgery by the practice nurse. Occasionally, punch biopsies do not need stitches.

You will need to book an appointment with the practice nurse well in advance of needing stitches removed or dressings renewed.

If you are concerned about discomfort when the stitches are removed, consider taking a simple pain relief, e.g. paracetamol, an hour before your appointment. Steri-strips (sticky strips) may be applied over the wound following suture removal to help support the wound.

Remember once the stitches have been removed the wound may appear healed but it will not be strong. It can take several months for skin to regain its strength and flexibility. Treat the area with care.

A greasy ointment, e.g. Vaseline, can be applied after removal of the dressing to prevent crusting.

Activity

You should try and rest as much as possible for the remainder of today. Remember you have had a small operation. Sport is best avoided for the next 3 days and for up to one week if your skin sample has come from a place located over 'active' muscles, especially the legs or shoulders. Stretched stitches may mean the wound will not hold together to heal properly or may leave a bumpy scar.

Bathing

The area should be kept covered for the next 3 days. Ideally the wound should be covered until any stitches are removed. If bathing, never leave a wet dressing in place. Wash your hands and change it for a plain plaster. A wet dressing increases your risk of infection.

The pathology result

This is normally available 2 weeks after the sample has been taken. The Dermatology Specialist will write to your GP explaining the result and any further treatment or action needed. We will send you a copy of this letter.

Complications

The signs of infection can be any of the following:

- Increasing pain at the site
- Swelling
- Redness
- A pus-like discharge

If you are concerned about any of the above, see your practice nurse promptly, taking your 'practice nurse letter' with you. **Your practice nurse is the first point of contact.** They will be able to assess your wound if you suspect it is infected.

If you experience persistent pain after 48 hours you may need advice from your GP.