



**The Leeds
Teaching Hospitals**
NHS Trust

Post-operative wound care

Information for
Dermatology patients

The importance of your post-operative care following your skin surgery cannot be overstressed. The care you take of yourself and your surgical wound is extremely important to the success of the procedure and to your recovery.

Dermatology Surgical Team to complete the following:

Name of Surgeon:	
Name of Nurse:	
Date:	
Procedure:	
Repair/closure:	<input type="checkbox"/> Primary <input type="checkbox"/> Local flap
	<input type="checkbox"/> Skin graft <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary intention
Dressing applied:	
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How should I look after my wound area?

Please leave any dressing on your wound(s) for days. It is very important to keep the dressing dry for this period of time.

If Steri-strips were applied please remove after days.

The dressing may be easier to remove if you wet it first. Running warm water will help remove the dressing.

If possible, have showers rather than baths so that your wound does not soak in water. Only have a bath if you can keep your wound out of the water. After removal of the dressing gently wash the wound with soap and water, either by washing in the shower or by splashing the treated area with warm soapy water. Gently pat your wound dry.

Once all dressings are removed we recommend you apply a thin layer of newly opened, yellow soft paraffin (Vaseline), or antibiotic ointment (if it has been prescribed for you) directly over your stitches with clean fingers. This will help to keep your wound clean and moist and will prevent scabs from forming. Please ensure you wash your hands every time this is applied to the area.

If you feel the wound is rubbing or catching on your clothes please apply a dressing over the wound. Your local Pharmacist will be able to help you with a selection of dressings.

If you have had surgery on your face, do not wear make-up over the scar until it has fully healed.

Any additional instructions:

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For wounds with stitches

- Please make an appointment with your GP Practice Nurse to have stitches removed after days
Phone your GP practice as soon as possible to book an appointment with them.

- An appointment has been arranged for your surface stitches to be removed in the Dermatology Department on Ward C4 in days
Day and date: Time:

- Your surface stitches will dissolve and do not need to be removed. Please note it can take a few weeks for your stitches to dissolve.

As your skin heals, it is natural for your wound to itch - this is part of the healing process. If your stitches cause you pain or discomfort, contact the Dermatology Department or your GP for advice.

Signs of infection - what to look out for:

It is expected that your wound will be slightly red and tender to touch for the first couple of days after your surgery, but if the wound becomes very painful, very hot, red and swollen with a yellow coloured discharge, please contact the Dermatology Department as soon as possible. These may be signs of infection and you may need antibiotics. The Dermatology Team will advise you on how to care for your wound and if you need to be seen in the department.

Bleeding / Bruising / Swelling

Bleeding can occur following surgery. To reduce this possibility, please follow these instructions:

- No physical activity for 48 hours
- Avoid taking blood thinners, aspirin or ibuprofen based products for 48 hours after surgery unless advised by your Doctor to continue them
- Avoid alcoholic beverages for 24 hours
- If you are on Warfarin please read the instructions on the separate leaflet '*Dermatology: Surgery and Anticoagulants*'

It is unlikely that your wound will bleed, but if this happens, don't panic. Sit down and press firmly on the dressing for 20 minutes. If the bleeding persists or you are at all worried, please phone the Dermatology Department and they will advise you on how to care for your wound and if you need to be seen in the department.

Monday to Thursday, 8am - 5pm and Friday 8am - 1pm:

0113 392 4292

Monday to Thursday, after 5pm and Friday after 1pm:

0113 392 4502 (Ward C2)

Friday 1pm to Monday 8am (over the weekend):

0113 392 4502 (Ward C2)

In the very unlikely event you have bleeding that you cannot stop, please phone as above, or go to your local A&E department.

You may experience some localised swelling and bruising, which may not be at its worst until three to four days after surgery. Swelling and bruising localised to the wound is normal and should improve within a week to 10 days.

Pain

The local anaesthetic will begin to wear off about one to two hours after the procedure. If you experience any pain you may take paracetamol. Please take as directed on the instructions. Avoid aspirin or ibuprofen based products, unless prescribed as a regular medication by your GP. Please note that if you are already taking medications such as co-codamol or codydramol that contain paracetamol, then no further paracetamol should be taken. Please follow the instructions on the packet and consult your Pharmacist if you have any queries or allergies.

Always read your medication instructions. If you are unsure, speak to your Pharmacist or GP.

Diet

Good nutrition is always important, but it is even more important after surgery when your body is recovering. Focus on the basics of healthy eating:

- avoid processed foods that are high in sugar and unhealthy fat such as biscuits, cakes, sweets, crisps, deep fried foods
- maintain an adequate protein intake (fish and seafood, chicken, meat, dairy products like Greek yoghurt and cottage cheese)
- plenty of fresh vegetables

These simple steps will give your body the building blocks it needs to heal and recover.

Exercise

Try to avoid any strenuous exercise and exertion, which may cause your wound to stretch. No running or heavy physical activities are recommended until your surgeon advises. If you have any concerns, please discuss with your GP/Practice Nurse.

Smoking

Smoking significantly delays wound healing, increases the risk of infection and can contribute to a more prominent scar. If you would like help giving up smoking, please speak to your Practice Nurse or call the **NHS Smoking Helpline on 0300 123 1044**.

Results

All specimens are sent for Pathology evaluation to confirm the result. You will be contacted about the results but this may take up to eight weeks.

Please note receptionists and medical secretaries do not give out results.

Scar Massage

Ask your Dermatology Doctor if scar massage is right for you.

In many cases, scar massage can be started about two to three weeks after the procedure. It can help the scar heal more quickly and reduce its appearance. Ask your doctor to show you how to massage your scar.

Scar massage can also help prevent scar tissue from adhesion, or sticking to the muscles, tendons, and other things beneath your skin. In general, use a slow, circular motion to massage the skin around your scar. Use firm pressure, but do not pull or tear at the skin. Moisturise and massage 3-4 times a day for 5-10 minutes.

Sun Exposure

The skin that forms as a scar is very delicate. Avoid sun exposure and apply sunscreen to help keep the scar from burning and minimise discoloration at all times. Use a high Sun Protection Factor (SPF) sunscreen of 30 or above to help protect all of your exposed skin.

Contact us:

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your procedure, please contact:

Dermatology Surgical and Laser Unit (Ward C4)

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0113 392 4292

Monday to Thursday, after 5pm and Friday after 1pm:
0113 392 4502 (Ward C2)

Friday 1pm to Monday 8am (over the weekend):
0113 392 4502 (Ward C2)

In an emergency, please contact your GP or go to your local A&E department.



What did you think of your care?

Scan the QR code or visit bit.ly/nhsleedsfft

Your views matter

