



The Dudley Group
NHS Foundation Trust

Advice after minor skin surgery or cautery using local anaesthetic

Dermatology Department
Patient Information Leaflet

Introduction

This leaflet is for people who have had a minor skin surgery or cautery using local anaesthetic. It gives information about:

- how to care for your wound
- what problems may happen and what you should do if these occur
- when you should get your stitches removed, if you have them

How should I look after my wound?

If your wound has stitches, we suggest that you try to keep the wound dry, as much as possible, until the stitches come out.

Normally the dressing that is applied in theatre will need to stay on your wound for at least two to three days. After that, you should consider changing your dressing if it becomes dirty or it is not properly protecting your wound. Please do not leave any dressing on for more than seven days.

Your nurse may advise you differently about how long you need to keep the dressing on in your particular case. They will also advise you if you need to see your GP practice or district nurse for a dressing change.

Please note that:

- If you have Steristrips (paper strips), these should be left on until stitches are removed. However, if they come off before this, do not worry.
- Some dressings are shower-proof but they should not be immersed in water as they are not completely waterproof.

If your wound has no stitches:

There may not be any stitches if your wound is sealed with cautery. This type of wound should form a scab which should slowly drop off, usually within four to six weeks. Please do not pick at the scab – allow the area to heal naturally.

What else do I need to know?

Numbness:

The local anaesthetic makes the area numb for a couple of hours or so. Please avoid contact with very hot or very cold things as it may result in a burn. For example, if you have had surgery near your mouth, avoid very hot or very cold drinks until the numbness wears off.

Pain:

Once the local anaesthetic wears off, you may experience some discomfort, soreness or pain in the first few days. Please take a painkiller like paracetamol, if you can take it (always read the label; do not exceed the recommended dose). Avoid aspirin, unless this is prescribed as a regular medication by your GP. Consult a pharmacist if you have any queries or allergies.

Bleeding:

It is unlikely that your wound(s) will bleed. However, if this happens, just press on the area firmly and constantly over the dressing, with a clean cloth, for up to 20 minutes. If bleeding does not stop, please get advice (see the box 'Useful contact numbers'). In an emergency, go to your nearest Emergency Department (A&E).

For wounds around the mouth, please consider having a light meal to reduce chewing, and using a straw to drink, in the first couple of days after surgery. This reduces the risk of bleeding and also helps healing.

Bruising:

This may happen in any area of your face or body, and will fade over a few weeks.

Infection:

You may have an infection if you have any of the following after two to three days of surgery:

- increasing redness, pain or swelling in and around the area
- a yellow discharge or fluid coming out of the wound

In this case, please get advice (see the box 'Useful contact numbers').

Scar:

You will have a scar after the procedure. Scars are permanent but may partly fade with time. Surgery on some areas such as the chest and shoulders can sometimes result in lumpy scars.

Splitting of wound:

Your wound may sometimes split before or after removal of the external stitches. Internal stitches, if used, may also come out through the skin surface. Please get advice if you think this may have happened (see the box 'Useful contact numbers').

Delayed or non-healing wound or ulceration:

Some wounds, particularly those on the lower leg, may take a long time to heal or may not heal after the procedure. Problems such as bleeding, infection or wound splitting may delay healing in any area. If this happens, you will need to have regular dressing changes under the care of your dermatologist, GP or GP practice or district nurse.

Smoking:

Try and stop smoking before and after surgery, as this will help the wound healing process. If you would like help with stopping smoking, please contact a member of the Hospital Stop Smoking Team on 01384 456111 ext. 2783.

Can I take part in exercise?

Try to avoid any exercise and exertion which may cause your wound to stretch, at least, until the stitches are removed. Your nurse or doctor will tell you if you have to do this for longer.

Avoid swimming until your stitches are removed and the skin looks healed.

When do I have my stitches removed?

Some wounds may be cauterised only and do not have stitches. If you have had stitches, they need to be removed a few days after the surgery, as written down for you below. Usually, you will need to contact your GP surgery to organise an appointment with a practice nurse to remove these stitches.

You have stitches in the following places:

1. Site:
Number of stitches:
Need to be removed after days
2. Site:
Number of stitches:
Need to be removed after days
3. Site:
Number of stitches:
Need to be removed after days
4. Site:
Number of stitches:
Need to be removed after days
5. Site:
Number of stitches:
Need to be removed after days

What if I am going on holiday?

If you are going on holiday, you should have informed your hospital doctor before the surgical procedure. It is your responsibility to arrange for your stitches to be removed while you are on holiday.

Useful contact numbers

If you need advice, contact:

Dermatology Department on 01384 244799 (9am to 5pm,
Monday to Friday)

or

Your GP

Outside normal working hours, you can contact:

- NHS 111
- Your local walk-in or Urgent Care Centre
- Your nearest Emergency Department (A&E)

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:

<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/dermatology/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet,
please email dgft.patient.information@nhs.net

This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.

للحصول على هذه النشرة بحجم أكبر، وعلى شكل إصدار صوتي و بلغات أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال بالرقم 08000730510.

此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ, ਬੋਲ ਕੇ ਰੀਕਾਰਡ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੀਆਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, 0800 073 0510 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜੀ।

Aceasta broșura poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru vă rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

یہ کتابچہ آپ کو بڑے حروف کی لکھائی، سمعی صورت اور دیگر زبانوں میں مہیا کیا جا سکتا ہے۔ برائے مہربانی فون نمبر 08000730510 پر رابطہ کریں۔