

Day Procedure Unit – Department of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery

Wound Care Advice

How should I look after the wound?

- For at least 3 days keep all wounds clean and dry, unless otherwise instructed.
- After 3 days, the wound and wound area (including dried blood) can be cleaned with mild soap and water. This area should be patted dry. This does not apply if you were given instructions not to remove dressings.
- You may have been given a Chloramphenicol ointment to use on the operated area. This should be applied 3 times a day for 1 week, or as instructed by your surgeon. The ointment can be safely used on any wounds even though it states that it is an eye ointment.

Head or Face surgery:

- Do not bend forward for at least 3 days. This will help stop bleeding in the area. You should refrain from strenuous activities such as heavy lifting, gardening, housework or manual labour
- Sleep with your head propped up on an extra pillow as this will help any swelling to drain away from the face

Hand or arm surgery:

- Keep the area elevated for at least 48 hours, and follow advice given on moving or resting your hand

What should I look out for?

- If the wound bleeds, apply gentle pressure for five minutes.
- You should seek help by calling the Plastics SHO on call (see below):
 - Pain persists even with pain killers
 - The wound is smelly or oozes through the dressings
 - You develop redness around the wound
 - You develop a raised temperature
 - You become generally unwell
 - You develop excessive swelling around the site of your operation
 - You have persistent bleeding

When can I start driving again or return to work?

- You should not drive home from your procedure. We recommend that you do not drive until you feel you are completely safe to do so. If the surgery is on your hands we would advise not driving until the stitches are removed.
- If you have a desk job you may return to work as soon as you feel comfortable and able. But if you have a manual job we recommend you do not work until the stitches have been removed.

Aftercare

Once your wounds are fully healed, you can:

- Start massaging your scar up to 3 times a day to improve the scar's flexibility.
- Use a non-perfumed moisturiser (such as aqueous cream) to moisturise the scar and surrounding skin.

If you have any concerns, please contact the Plastic Surgery SHO on-call via the hospital switchboard on 01603 286286 (Dect phone 6497).

