



BOULDER PLASTIC SURGERY Prof., L.L.C.

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***PATIENT INFORMATION FOR ROUTINE CARE OF WOUNDS OR
INCISIONS***

1. All wound care should be relatively simple and require little effort on your part.
2. Wounds are closed with sutures placed beneath the skin, which re-absorb over a period of weeks to months, as well as sutures placed in the skin, which are visible, and will need to be removed. If you have external sutures, you will be given a follow-up appointment for suture removal.
3. It is normal to have a small amount of drainage along the incision line from any wound for a period of 2-3 days. The secretions can be easily removed using a small amount of half strength hydrogen peroxide on a clean washcloth or Q-tip. Wounds should be cleaned as necessary to remove secretions or crust built-up from drainage. When the wound ceases to drain, additional wound care is unnecessary. **IT IS NOT NECESSARY TO USE STERILE TECHNIQUE FOR ROUTINE WOUND CARE.**
4. If there are small "raw" areas along your wound, after cleaning with peroxide as described above, apply a very **SMALL** amount of bacitracin or polysporin ointment **TO THE RAW AREAS ONLY**. The antibiotic ointment may be obtained at any drugstore without a prescription. As soon as these areas have healed over slightly, discontinue the use of the ointment, since it can cause allergic reaction if used to excess.
5. If you have a skin graft, it is very important to keep the skin graft lightly coated with an antibiotic ointment or vaseline until you are advised otherwise.
6. You may wash over any wounds with normal soap and water and towel dry 24 hours after surgery. **ALLOWING A WOUND TO BE WET CAUSES NO SIDE AFFECTS AS LONG AS THE WOUND IS NOT SOAKED FOR LONG PERIODS OR IMMERSSED IN WATER.**
7. It is beneficial to use an ice-pack or iced compress, as well as to elevate a fresh wound for the first 24 to 48 hours following surgery to reduce the swelling, bruising, and discomfort in the surgical field. Although numerous ointments, potions, etc., have been reputed to be of assistance in achieving a more desirable scar result, there are no objective scientific data at this time to support the use of these materials. Nevertheless, if you desire and feel that other medications (vitamin E creams, aloe vera, cocoa butter, etc.) are desirable for use, you may apply them beginning two weeks following your operation in areas which are completely healed, (no raw areas).

8. If small tapes (steri-strips) have been placed over your wound, they are “glued” in place with an adhesive material to the skin and should tolerate showering over that area. Usually, these will begin to loosen between 5 to 7 days and at that time, you may remove them by gently pulling along the line of the wound, (not across or perpendicular to the direction of the wound).
9. No bandages are necessary over most wounds. If the wound is draining slightly, to avoid contact with your clothes, a light bandage may be utilized at your discretion. If you desire to cover the wound while in public, a bandage again may be used at your discretion.
10. Wound edges will be everted (rolled outward and upward) and will produce a ridge along the incision line which will subside over a period of weeks. This gives the best (least visible) scar, after allowing time for the scar to mature. Redness will appear in the wound and will persist for weeks to months depending on your individual rate of healing. It will then subside as the scar totally matures over a period of six to twelve months.
11. If a healed wound area appears dry or scaly, any type of mild moisturizing cream may be used to soften the skin and prevent dryness. Sun exposure should be avoided as much as possible over maturing scars. The ultra-violet rays of the sun will increase the redness in the scar and will make the redness persist for a much longer period of time. Once the wound is healed, any satisfactory sun blocking agent with an SPF rating of 30 to 45 may be applied directly over the scar to help reduce ultra-violet exposure. Your physician can recommend satisfactory sun screens if you desire.
12. Signs of infection in the wound usually appear three or more days following surgery, but may appear earlier. These include a significant increase in redness surrounding the wound, increase of the discomfort in the wound over a 24 to 48 hour period, often swelling in the wound, possibly yellowish colored or abnormal amounts of drainage from the wound. Should any of these occur contact the office immediately at 303.443.2277.
13. Manual massage to facial scars with aloe vera/vitamin E oil is recommended until scars flatten and smooth out. The application of silicone scar strips to trunk, chest, abdominal and extremity scars for 3 to 6 months will allow these scars to heal as inconspicuously as possible ie. flatter, narrower and less red. We also can treat scars selectively with a pulse dye vascular laser to reduce their visibility. You can Google “silicone scar strips”, or go to www.healingenhancements.com or www.biodermis.com to order on line.
14. If you have any additional questions, or should problems arise, please contact the office, 303.443.2277.