

OHSU Department of Dermatology

Wound care instructions- 1-2 week follow-up

Wounds that have been sutured:

Continue to apply Vaseline ointment to the incision line for another 1-2 weeks until the skin surface is completely healed over.

Wounds that are steri-stripped:

Keep the steri-strips on until they peel off. Replace the strips as needed. If the strips are itchy or uncomfortable, remove them and apply Vaseline to the incision line.

At one month start massaging the scar 3-5 times daily, with moderate pressure. This will help the sutures underneath the skin dissolve.

Occasionally a suture from underneath the skin can “spit” out, causing a pimple or some drainage along the incision line. This usually happens at 1-2 months after the surgery. You can pull out the suture or come in and one of our nurses will remove it for you. Warm compresses can also help the suture work its way to the surface.

It usually takes 3 months for all the sutures under the skin to dissolve and at that time your scar should be smooth and flat. If it is not, please let us know.

Wounds that are granulating (healing naturally):

Apply Vaseline ointment to the wound and cover it with a bandage until the skin surface grows over. These wounds heal from the bottom up so that first your body will fill in the hole and then will grow the top layer of skin. If the wound grows “heaped up” tissue over the level of the surrounding skin, come in for a follow up appointment where we can apply a medicine to your wound. As the wound heals it is normal for the wound to be itchy.

Wounds that have been grafted:

A graft usually takes about a month to fully heal. After the sutures have been removed, continue to apply Vaseline liberally and keep the wound covered. You can wash the wound 1-2 times daily. At one month, start massaging the grafted area. At about 6 -12 weeks your graft site will be puffy. This is because the graft is trying to find its lymphatic drainage pathway. This is normal and will decrease. If the puffiness is bothering you a lot, we can improve this with a cortisone injection, so please come in for a follow-up appointment.

If at any time you have concerns about the appearance of your scar, please make a follow-up visit with us. Remember that smoking is detrimental to wound healing and your final cosmetic result. It is recommended to use VASELINE (petrolatum) and NOT Neosporin or polysporin as it is common to develop an allergy to these topical antibiotics.