

Jonathan Lopez, MD  
Mohs/Excision Postoperative Care - External Sutures

- It is normal to have some discomfort for the first 48 to 72 hours after surgery. For most patients, acetaminophen (Tylenol) taken at a dose of 1000 mg every 6 hours (two 500 mg tablets or three 325 mg tablets) will achieve adequate pain relief. Do not consume alcohol while you are taking acetaminophen, and do not take acetaminophen if you have a history of liver disease or have been told by a physician not to take acetaminophen. Do not exceed more than 4,000 mg of acetaminophen in a 24 hour period.
- If acetaminophen alone does not provide adequate pain control, continue taking acetaminophen and add ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) at a dose of 400 mg every 4 hours as needed. Do not exceed 3,200 mg of ibuprofen in a 24 hour period.
- Cold compresses with a bag of ice or frozen peas can help minimize pain, swelling, and bruising and can be used for 15 minutes out of every hour.
- Keeping the surgical site elevated can also minimize pain, swelling, and bruising. If your surgery was on your head or neck, we recommend sleeping with an extra pillow for a few nights. After having surgery on your face it is not unusual for there to be substantial swelling or bruising of one or both eyes a few days after surgery.

Wound care instructions: Unless instructed otherwise, keep the original dressing clean and dry (no showering) and leave it in place for 24 to 48 hours. After 24 to 48 hours, you may start your routine wound care as outlined below and get the area wet in the shower. Do not submerge your wound (such as in a pool or tub) for 2 weeks.

At each dressing change (one to two times per day):

1. Wash your hands with soapy water.
2. Remove the bandage and gently wash the area with warm soapy water, rinse, then pat (do not rub) dry with a clean towel. Allow the area to air dry for 5 to 30 minutes.
3. Using a clean cotton-tipped applicator (Q-Tip), apply a thin film of petroleum jelly (Vaseline) to the surgical site then apply a non-adherent dressing such as Telfa and secure it with tape or a wrap. If the wound is small, a bandage such as a Band-Aid may be used.
4. Using these instructions, clean your surgical site one to two times a day until your scheduled appointment to have your sutures removed, or if no sutures need to be removed, for one to two weeks.

Call the office if you notice any of the following symptoms:

- Increasing pain, tenderness, or swelling at the surgical site.
- Increasing redness or warmth around the surgical site. A thin pink rim is a normal part of wound healing.
- Thick yellow or green drainage from the surgical site.
- A body temperature of 100.4 degrees fahrenheit without any signs of coughing, sore throat, vomiting, or diarrhea.
- If your surgical site is bleeding, hold firm pressure for 30 continuous minutes (no peeking). This should stop the overwhelming majority of bleeding. If you are having trouble with bleeding, pain, or anything else, call **the office at 813-867-6200**, or if after hours, **Dr. Lopez on his cell phone**.