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**Aerlyn Dawn, M.D.**

*Mohs Micrographic Surgery for Skin Cancer*

**Post-Operative Wound Care Instructions**

*(Please read instructions carefully and call the office with any questions)*

Bandaging & Cleaning:

* We recommend that you wait *at least* 24 hours to change your bandage. If the bandage remains intact, **you may wait up to 48 hours before changing your bandage**.

*Change Dressing Daily by Following the Instructions Below:*

* Use a cotton swab or Q-tip to gently cleanse the area with warm water and mild soap. This may take several swabs. You may take a shower as normal, the water touching your surgical site will not interfere with it.
* If a scab or crust is present, cover the area with a cotton ball or paper towel and warm water for 10 minutes to soften the crust, then follow the dressing instructions.
* Cut a piece of Telfa (nonstick dressing) just large enough to cover the surgical site or use a bandage large enough to cover the entire surgical site. If using a bandage be sure that it is one that has adhesive all the way around it.
* Apply Vaseline/Aquaphor or if prescribed Mupirocin to the bandage, then place over wound.
* If using a Tefla dressing secure the bandage to the surgical site with micropore tape (paper tape)
* **Bandage must be airtight** to promote faster wound healing. If you cannot get the bandage airtight, change the bandage more often and reapply Vaseline/Aquaphor or Mupirocin.
* If the surgical site is near your eye, we recommend Lacri-lube (over the counter).
* Repeat these steps daily for \_\_\_\_\_ days.

Icing & Elevation:

* **Apply ice over your bandage 20 minutes out of every hour** **while you are awake** during the first 48 hours after surgery. Use bagged frozen peas or corn or crushed ice in a zip-lock bag, place over the bandage, and cover with a small towel.
* If the surgical site is on an extremity, elevate whenever possible to minimize swelling.

Pain:

* Take extra strength Tylenol as directed for pain. If a prescription narcotic pain medication has been prescribed, please take as directed for pain if necessary and avoid driving. Pain is usually worst in the first 48 hours and should improve significantly after that. If you have severe pain that is not controlled by these medications or your pain is worsening after several days, call the office (301-662-6755) during business hours. If it is **after business hours, call Dr. Dawn directly on his cell phone at 443-909-9041.**
* **Do NOT** take any other over-the-counter pain medications such as Aspirin, Ibuprofen (Advil) or Naproxen (Aleve) because these can increase the risk of bleeding.

Bleeding:

* It is normal to have a small amount of blood on your bandage. If you experience significant bleeding around the surgical site, lie down **and apply firm, continuous pressure to the surgical site for at least 15 to 20 minutes** (as noted by your watch). DO NOT discontinue pressure to check if the bleeding has stopped until at least 15 minutes has passed. If the bleeding continues, you are probably not putting enough pressure or the pressure is in the wrong location.
* If significant bleeding continues, call the office immediately (301-662-6755) during business hours. Rarely,it may be necessary to go to the nearest emergency room.

Swelling, Bruising, & Drainage:

* It is common to have significant swelling, redness, and bruising in the first week after surgery. If surgery was performed on the upper face, one or both eyes may swell shut temporarily. **Swelling may worsen for 2 to 3 days after surgery.** In most cases, swelling will significantly improve by 1 week after surgery.
* Clear or slightly yellowish drainage from the wound may occur and sometimes has a foul odor. Drainage usually decreases after several days. If you have an open wound, drainage may continue for several weeks. If you experience increased or spreading redness, wound beginning to open or increased tenderness, thick discolored and foul smelling drainage please call us as this could be a sign of infection. Please call the office with any questions or concerns (301-662-6755).

Antibiotics:

Oral antibiotics are sometimes prescribed for surgery in certain locations or for complicated reconstructions. If prescribed, take your antibiotic as directed until all pills are gone. If you have significant side effects or an allergic reaction (including hives or widespread rash), discontinue the medication and call the office (301-662-6755).

Exercise, Smoking, and Alcohol:

* Avoid any exercise for at least 48 hours after surgery. Avoid straining, bending over, or lifting objects over 10-15 pounds for at least two weeks after surgery.
* **Do NOT** drink alcohol for 48 hours after surgery. Alcohol increases your risk of bleeding.
* **Do NOT** smoke during your healing after surgery. Cigarette smoking constricts blood vessels, impairs wound healing, and can sometimes cause failure of the surgical reconstruction.

**POST-OPERATIVE FOLLOW UP**

* **Schedule an appointment to have your sutures removed in \_\_\_\_\_\_ days.**
* **Follow up with Dr. Dawn in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ days / weeks / months / as needed to evaluate the surgical site or sooner if you have any questions or concerns.**
* **Schedule an appointment within 3 months for a skin check with your regular dermatologist.**