

ENT Minor Surgery Post-Operative Care

Important information for patients

- ☐ You have **absorbable** stitches. Keep the area dry for 4-5 days. The stitches should dissolve in 2-3 weeks.
- ☐ You have **non-absorbable** stitches and should arrange to have these removed by your practice nurse (at your GP surgery) in _____ days.
- ☐ We have **not** arranged a follow-up appointment for you, and will write to you with your results. If you have any concerns regarding your procedure, you may contact us for a review appointment up to 6 weeks following your procedure (please see contact details at the end of this letter).
- ☐ We **will** arrange a follow-up appointment for you, and you should receive details of this within _____ weeks / months, but we will also write to you with your results when they are available.

What to expect:

- The local anaesthetic lasts for 2-3 hours. Following this most patients find that a simple painkiller (such as paracetamol) is sufficient to control their discomfort. Please follow the instructions on the packet.
- Your wound may bleed following the procedure. Please try to remain calm if it does – it is not unusual, and can usually be controlled with simple pressure. **Sit upright and place a clean pad over the area, then apply firm pressure for 10-15 minutes. Please time this and do not remove the pad to check the wound during this time.**
- You are likely to have some swelling and bruising to the area for a couple of weeks. This is normal and will gradually reduce.
- You are likely to have numbness and possibly some facial weakness initially, because of the local anaesthetic. This will improve as the local anaesthetic wears off. After this time you may still have altered sensation either immediately around the area, or distant to it, depending on which nerves were involved with your skin lesion. Very often this improves in time.
- You may need to refrain from work until the area has healed – your practitioner will provide you with the necessary documentation on request.

What should you do?

- Please keep the area clean and dry as this will help to ensure that the wound heals well. This may mean that you cannot wash your hair, or shave until the stitches have been removed.
- **Please try to keep the original dressing intact – even if they have some blood on them. You may cover the dressing applied in hospital, but please do not remove and replace it unless you are experiencing a reaction to the dressing, in which case remove it and seek medical advice.**
- If your dressing falls off after a few days and the wound is clean and dry there is no need to have a new dressing applied. If your wound is healing well you may gently (patting wet and dry) cleanse the wound, but do not rub it.
- If the area is very bruised or swollen, try using an extra pillow at night to elevate your head, or a cold compress to reduce swelling.

Try to avoid:

- Bending down (as much as possible) for the next 24-48 hours as this will cause increased pressure on the wound and increase the risk of bleeding.
- Alcohol (for 24 hours) after the surgery as this will increase the risk of bleeding.
- Taking aspirin (unless you are prescribed it) for 24 hours after surgery, as this will also increase the risk of bleeding.
- If you smoke, please try not to after your surgery for at least 24 hours. If you would like assistance and advice regarding stopping smoking, please ask any of our staff.
- Strenuous exercise for the next couple of weeks.
- Using any make-up on the area until the scar has completely healed.

What about follow-up appointments?

Details of this are at the start of this letter.

What is cause for concern?

- If the area around your wound gets more red rather than less in the days following the operation.
- If the wound develops a steady discharge (this may be clear, yellow, creamy, greenish or possibly blood-stained), and may smell offensive.
- If the discomfort you experience from the wound increases rather than decreases in the days following the operation.
- If you have any concerns regarding your wound healing, please contact us on the numbers below, Monday to Friday 9am-5pm (excluding bank holidays). Outside these hours contact your GP. If it's an emergency contact the GP out of hours or attend the nearest Emergency Department (A&E).

Long term care:

- Approximately two weeks after your procedure you may commence gentle massage. Use your normal moisturiser and gently massage in circular motions along the scar at least three times per day. Continue this (gradually increasing the pressure of the massage) until the scar is soft to the touch. This may take up to twelve months following your procedure, but the more you massage the better your scar will be.
- Protect your scar from sunlight.
- Be vigilant for the development of any new skin lesions.

Contacts for Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT)

ENT Outpatients clinic: 01270 612206 Monday to Friday 9am-5pm (excluding bank holidays)

Specialist Nurse: 01270 273621 (answerphone)

ENT secretaries: 01270 612297 Monday to Friday 9am-5pm (excluding bank holidays)

This information has been reviewed by the Readers' Panel October 2014.

This information is available in audio, large print and other languages. To request a copy, please telephone 01270 273621.

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