

Looking after your wound after you have had surgery on the skin of your head, neck or face

Maxillofacial

Patient Name:

Please make an appointment to have removal of
stitches or wound review at GP / Practice Nurse /
Head and Neck Department on:

Nurse sign and print:

What is this information about?

This information tells you how to take care of your wound after your surgery.

It tells you what activities you need to avoid, how to keep your wound clean, and signs of infection to look out for. It also tells you what your scar will look like once it has healed, and when you will get the results of your operation.

You will find contact details for the Head & Neck and Maxillofacial departments at the bottom of this information.

Will I need to take extra care after my operation?

Yes. It is very important that you rest for at least 48 hours after your operation.

For the first 48 hours do not do any activities that will push up your blood pressure, like shopping, cycling, or dog walking.

As your operation has been on your head, neck or face, you will need to keep your head raised to reduce any swelling or bleeding. Avoid bending down. Try to sleep on two pillows for the first couple of nights.

For at least two weeks, or until the wound is fully healed, do not do swimming, sports and exercise, heavy lifting or heavy manual work.

What do I need to do with my wound and any dressings?

You will need to keep your wound and any dressings clean and dry and in place until your dressing needs to be removed.

If there is no dressing, please keep the wound dry for 72 hours. Before you shower, put Vaseline on the wound to protect it from the water. Pat it dry when you come out of the shower.

What should I do if the wound starts to bleed?

Be aware

It is normal to expect some blood to ooze from the wound. If you notice any bleeding, apply constant pressure with gauze for 15 to 20 minutes. Keep the pressure on continually.

It should eventually stop, but if for any reason you cannot stop the bleeding, please go to your nearest Accident and Emergency.

What should I take for pain?

We recommend regular paracetamol for pain relief if your wound is painful. Avoid Aspirin as this can increase the risk of bleeding.

How will I know if I have an infection in my wound?

Infection can be a complication of any operation. If you get an infection, it will usually appear two to seven days after the procedure.

Be aware

If you notice pain getting worse, redness and swelling or discharge from your wound please contact the department.

What will my wound look like straight after the surgery?

All skin surgery produces a scar. At first the scar will be raised and red, but this will improve as the healing process settles down. Eventually you should just see a fine line.

Occasionally you may have stitch marks, a depressed scar, a raised scar (keloid), changes of skin colour or a stretched scar.

What will my wound look like some time after the surgery?

The appearance of your scar will continue to improve for up to 18 months. You can help to soften the scar tissue and aid the healing process by massaging a simple moisturiser into the area twice a day for two to three months.

Wound strength (how well your wound is healing and getting stronger) takes four to six weeks to develop and up to 18 months to fully mature.

If you are outside, please make sure that you apply a factor SPF 50 or above, as well as wearing protective clothing and staying in the shade.

When will I have the results of the operation?

We usually have the results back up to four weeks after your operation. You will have a follow-up appointment when we tell you your results.

If after four weeks you have not heard from the department, please contact the secretaries on:

01273 696955 Ext. 64756 / 67623 / 63695
uhsussex.brighton.maxillofacial@nhs.net

Who should I contact for further information and advice?

The Head and Neck Department, Royal Sussex County Hospital
Monday to Friday 01273 696955 Ext. 67915 / 64813

The Maxillofacial Dept. Princess Royal Hospital, Haywards Heath
Monday to Thursday 01444 441881 Ext. 68308 / 68307

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