NHS
University Hospitals Sussex
NHS Foundation Trust

Stitch and dressing advice

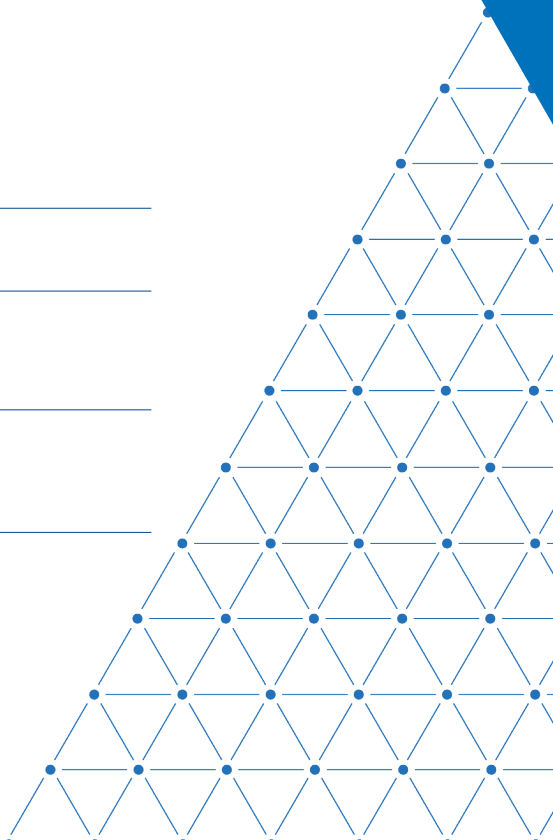
Dermatology

Date:

Patients name:

Patient information:

Practice nurse information:



Patient information

What is this information about?

This information will give you information about your dressings and your stitches, and how you need to look after the area after your operation.

Will I need to take extra care after my operation?

It is important that you rest for the next 48 hours after your operation. Following these 48 hours, it is important that you avoid any further strenuous activity for a minimum of 2 weeks, or until the wound has completely healed if this has taken longer.

If you have had surgery to your head or face, it is important that you do not bend down, and you try and sleep on an extra pillow for the first few nights. If you have had surgery to your lower legs, it is important that you rest and keep your leg up as much as possible until the wound has completely healed.

Will it be painful?

Once the local anaesthetic has worn off you might find that you have some minor pain or discomfort. This is usually helped by taking paracetamol. Follow the instructions on the packet. **Please do not take aspirin or ibuprofen as pain relief as this can increase the risk of bleeding.**

If you are prescribed aspirin for another condition, it is important to continue taking this.

What do I need to do with my dressings?

The instructions are at the start of this information. Please read and follow what it says. It will tell you when your dressing needs to be removed and if you are able to do this yourself, or whether you need to see your practice nurse at your GP surgery.

What type of stitches do I have?

You will either have absorbable stitches or stitches that will need to be removed. This will have been written at the start of this information.

If you have stitches that are absorbable, they do not need to be removed. These can take up to 4 weeks to absorb whilst the wound is healing.

If you have stitches that need to be removed, you will need to make an appointment with your nurse at your GP surgery on the date written at the start of this information.

If you have internal stitches to make the wound stronger you may see them slightly pop out of the wound edge after 2-3 weeks. If this does happen then you can simply lift the end of the stitch and cut it flush with the wound. If you are unsure, you will need to see your nurse at your GP surgery.

What should I do if my wound bleeds?

It is normal to expect some oozing of blood from the wound. If you notice any constant bleeding, apply constant pressure with a clean cloth for 15 to 20 minutes. Keep the pressure on continually. It should eventually stop.

If you cannot stop the bleeding, contact your GP, nearest walk-in centre, A&E department or call **NHS 111**

What should I do if I take blood thinning medication?

This does increase the chances that your wound will bleed.

Do not

✗ stop taking your medicines unless you have been advised to do so by your health care professional.

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

If you have any of these symptoms in the few days after your treatment you may have an infection:

- increasing pain
- swelling and redness. This may be more difficult to see on black or brown skins and could appear as an area of darker skin
- generally feeling unwell.

Do

✓ contact your GP straight away if you have any of these symptoms as you may need to be treated with antibiotics.

How will my skin look after my operation?

All skin surgery will leave a scar. Initially this might be raised and red or dark, but this will improve. You can help soften the scar and aid the healing process by massaging Vaseline onto the scar twice a day until it has completely healed.

Our skin can look different after treatment. Changes can include:

- loss of colour in the skin (hypopigmentation)
- dark re-pigmentation at the base of the wound
- a depressed scar (a scar that dips inwards)
- a raised scar (keloid): a keloid scar happens when a scar keeps growing and covers a larger area than the original wound. There is a greater chance that you may get a keloid scar if your procedure was on your chest or back or if you have black or brown skin.

The cosmetic appearance of a scar will continue to improve for up to 18 months.

Who can I contact for further information or advice?

If you have any questions about your wound please please contact the **Dermatology Department at Brighton General Hospital** on our dressings email (Preferred contact).

Brighton General Hospital

uhsussex.dermdressingteam@nhs.net

01273 665041

8.30am to 5.30pm. **Out of these hours please call your nearest A&E, walk in centre or NHS 111.**

When will I find out about my surgery results?

It takes on average two to three weeks for the results to be processed, after which time we will contact you. You will receive a letter with your skin surgery results, copied to your GP.
If you have not heard from us six weeks after your procedure, please telephone the dermatology secretaries **01273 665019 .**
Opening hours 8.30am to 5.30pm.

Dermatology secretaries **01273 665019**
8.30pm to 5.30pm

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This leaflet is intended for patients receiving care in Brighton and Hove and Hayward's Heath.

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