

Wound Care with Steri-Strips

1. You can remove the bulky white pressure dressing bandage in 24 hours after your shower.
2. Shower first, then remove the white pressure dressing bandage. Do not scrub or soap the area.
3. Under the white pressure dressing, you will see skin-colored or tan-colored “steri-strips” that directly cover the wound and sutures. Leave these alone (**Do not remove**). If the steri-strips curl at the ends, you can snip the curled ends with scissors.
4. Steri-strips usually stay on after shower. Remove only if blood-soaked. Removing these prematurely and with excessive force can damage the fragile skin around the wound – be gentle!
5. If Steri-strips fall off, cleanse crusted areas by soaking it with a gentle cleanser (Dove soap, CeraVe, or Cetaphil) for 10 minutes. Gently rinse off the soap and crusted area.
6. Apply a thin layer of **Aquaphor Healing Ointment** or **Vaseline petrolatum jelly** for 1-2 weeks using a Q tip over the entire scar. If you are not allergic to polysporin or Bacitracin, that can be used instead. **DO NOT USE NEOSPORIN** as many people develop an allergy with a wound.
7. **Today & tomorrow, ice the area once an hour for 5-10 minutes. Take Tylenol if you have pain (maximum 4000 mg daily if no liver problems)** for 1-3 days. Do not resume blood-thinners / ibuprofen until 3 days after surgery, as this make your wound more likely to bleed.
8. **DO NOT EXERCISE for 3 days.** Avoid any exercise that can stretch the area where you had surgery for **at least 1 week** (2 weeks for legs), and preferably no exercise until suture removal.
9. If you plan to be active (exercise, walking), cover the steri-strips and wound with a large band-aid or non-stick gauze bandage (e.g., Telfa can be purchased at pharmacy) and paper tape. The bandage size should be slightly larger than the wound. Change it once daily. Your cosmetic results may not be optimal if you choose to exercise or stretch the wound while it is healing.
10. If your wound is below the knees, wear compression stockings (20/30 mmHg) every morning until you sleep, and elevate your feet whenever possible.
11. Call the office & ask for a nurse if you have questions about the way the area is healing. For oozing, hold constant firm pressure for 20 minutes (set a timer) without peeking.

WATCH FOR INFECTION: Infection may appear 3-4 days after surgery as **worsening redness or tenderness**, foul odor, green color or non-clear drainage. If it **looks worse rather than better** after 3-4 days, **call us if you think you are getting an infection**. A different antibiotic may be needed, so come for an evaluation. Deep dissolving sutures can spit out like a pimple 4-6 weeks post surgery. Call if this happens. Sometimes people are allergic to Polysporin or adhesive – STOP & switch to paper tape if the surrounding skin gets red/itchy.

TO MINIMIZE SCARRING: #1 step is to **avoid the sun**. Keep the wound covered or protect the scar with a physical blocker sunscreen every 2 hours while outdoors (Elta MD sunscreen zinc oxide). Scars do not tan as well as normal skin, so they turn white. Over-the-counter silicone gel scar gel (**Biocorneum medical grade silicone**) can be purchased at the office, or other formulations can be found at the pharmacy (Cica-Care or Scar Away **silicone gel or sheeting**). Start using these after wound has healed (after suture removal, or 1-2 weeks after the surgery). Scar gels & patches can be used for 4-6 months. **Massage the area to flatten the scar tissue a few minutes a day**, which can take 6-12 months to heal fully. Call us for your routine full body skin examination every 6 months and to check the scar. ©JoannaChanMD.com