

## Post-Op Instructions

### First Week After Sutures Are Removed

Once sutures are removed, do **not** continue to apply a layer of polysporin ointment to the incision. Medicated ointment if used for more than a week or so may cause a sensitivity reaction in many people. In a clean environment, the incision may be left uncovered. Keeping an incision dry after surgery helps to prevent infection. In a dirty environment, cover the incision with a band-aid or a light gauze dressing. If the fresh incision is soiled, it can be gently washed running water and gently patted dry with a clean towel. Do **not** rub excessively or firmly as the fresh incision can be pulled apart. You may wash and shower normally, but do **not** submerge the incision under water during the week after the sutures are removed. Submersing the incision will cause it to swell and weaken which may result in the incision opening. Do **not** massage the incision with any creams or scar products during the first week after the sutured come out. Rubbing the incision may be too much for it and cause it to open. Avoid any strenuous activity during the first week after the sutures are removed as this may cause trauma to the area that can cause the incision to open.

### Second Week After Sutures Are Removed

During the second week after suture removal, begin massaging the incision with Vitamin E cream. This can be done daily for three months after surgery to help prevent excessive scar tissue from developing along the incision. Massage should be for only a minute or two, once or twice a day. First the cream should be massaged into the area like any moisturizing cream. Then two or three fingers should be placed on the incision, and without sliding the fingers over the skin, make small gentle rotating motions with the fingers. This helps to keep the scar flat and encourages good contours in the skin at the site of the incision. Massage also helps to reduce itching and numbness at the surgical site. Other topical products have been developed to treat scars, but none have been shown to have a clear benefit. Aloe Vera, Emu oil, Bio oil, Vitamin E oil may also be used to moisturize the incision.

Action during the second week after suture removal should remain sedentary. It is not until four weeks after surgery that the incision becomes fairly strong. It is not until six weeks from surgery that unrestricted forceful activity can be performed without any chance that the incision can be pulled open.

The treated area may remain pink for some time. Usually the color fades over six months, but may last several months longer, even up to two years. It is important to continue avoiding the sun and using sun block for a full six months after surgery. Make-up may be applied as early as three weeks after surgery.

### Things to watch for:

**Infection:** Redness, increased swelling, increased pain, discharge or a fever, all may indicate infection. If any of these things occur call Dr. Fortin's office. If it is after normal business hours, and you do not feel your condition can wait until the next business day, you should go to the nearest emergency department.

**Bleeding:** A small amount of red discharge from a fresh incision is normal for up to about 48 hours after surgery. If the dressing is light, it may be necessary to change it once or twice on the day following surgery. If bleeding is persistent, apply gentle pressure over the incision.

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## **Abnormal Scar Development**

Most scars look like thin pink lines for the first six weeks after surgery. If a scar is going to become abnormal, it usually begins between six and twelve weeks after surgery. After twelve weeks, scars usually only improve with time. If your scar begins to feel raised, widened or thickened, you should make an appointment to see Dr. Fortin.

## **Silicone Gel Sheeting**

In order to prevent a scar that is raised or thickened scar manufacturers developed Silicone Gel Sheeting. This consists of a material backing with smooth silicone gel attached to it. The sheet is applied each day after washing and left on as long as possible. It can be worn twenty-four hours a day, if tolerated. It can be washed with water and becomes sticky as it dries helping to hold it in place over the incision. When first introduced it was studied extensively. Because most people make good scars in the absence of any intervention, it was difficult to conclude that it had a significant beneficial effect. Although it may not make a good scar better, it has been shown to help raised scars become flatter. It is expensive and will cost seventy-five to several hundred of dollars for the course of treatment. A prescription can be given if your insurance plan covers this.

## **Laboratory results**

If a specimen was taken at the time of your surgery, you will be contacted regarding the laboratory results. If a follow-up appointment is needed, one can be arranged at that time. If you are uncertain about your results or require clarification about anything related to your treatment, please make an appointment with Dr. Fortin. Referral for new issues however, must be made through the family physician.

**Please notify the office if you have sought out any medical attention 10 days post-surgical procedure**

**If you have any questions regarding your surgery please call Dr. Fortin's office.**

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