



Wound Care After Facial Reconstruction

Before surgery:

- NO SMOKING or nicotine is recommended for 6 weeks prior and 2 weeks after. This will improve healing and reduce scarring.
- NO ALCOHOL is recommended for 2 days prior and 2 weeks post operatively.
- UNEXPECTED HEALTH PROBLEMS – Please contact us immediately if during the week prior to surgery you develop a cold, sore throat, fever, cold sore, or any skin problems.
- Arnica montana is an herb that can help reduce bruising and swelling, and is sold at health food stores and online. Follow directions on the package.

The morning of your procedure/surgery:

- Wash your face and neck with plain soap (or Hibiclens solution, if prescribed)
- On the morning of surgery, do NOT apply any makeup, moisturizers, or other skin care products after washing your face
- Wear a button down the front shirt the day of surgery. ***No over the head garments please***
- Leave all jewelry/watches home. Wear glasses or be prepared to remove contacts.
- If you will be having anesthesia, you will need a responsible adult to drive you home and to stay with you the first 24 hours after surgery.
- Search *YouTube* for “Wound Care Bowman” to watch a video version of this handout.

Over the Counter Items Needed After Surgery:

1. Plain unscented soap
 2. Cotton tip applicators (i.e. Q-tips) or cotton balls
 3. Vaseline or aquaphor ointment: Any brand will do.
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Postop Instructions

- You may shower the day after surgery. Be aware, you may be instructed to keep some part of your wound dry.
- Wound care, repeat twice a day: Clean all sutures GENTLY with soap and water with a Q-tip or cotton. Then apply a small amount of Vaseline (or ointment).
- Bruising is normal, and may appear even a few days after surgery.
- No heavy lifting or strenuous activity (lifting more than 15 lb) or vigorous exercise for 2 weeks.
- Makeup can be applied one day after suture removal.
- After suture removal, a scar treatment like Skin Medica's Scar Recovery Gel or Scar Fade (available on Amazon or other internet sites) can be applied twice a day. Only a very thin layer is necessary.
- Avoid sun to the incisions for 3-6 months.
- If you have questions please call our office at 540-443-7400.

For skin grafts:

- Keep the yellow Xeroform dressing DRY! You may shower but keep the spray away from the dressing.
- You may use a little peroxide to clean off crust around the base of the bandage if needed. *For pedicled flaps:*
- The pedicle of your flap is the bridge of tissue going from where the skin was removed to where the cancer defect was repaired.
- The pedicle should be wrapped in Xeroform gauze (Vaseline gauze) to reduce crusting. It should be changed daily or more often if needed
- You may shower and/or wash your face as normal. Remove the Xeroform before, and replace afterwards.
- For video instruction, search YouTube for "Bowman wound care for a pedicled facial flap"
- Please call the office if you have any questions