

# Instructions for Granulating Wound Care Before and After Surgery

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## What is a granulating wound care?

**Granulating** is when a wound is healing and filling in. Granulating wound care means allowing your wound to heal on its own. It will take approximately 6-8 weeks for your wound to granulate (fill in).

## What should I do before surgery to help my wound heal?

- Stop smoking cigarettes 6 weeks before surgery.
- Stop chewing tobacco 4 weeks before surgery.
- No alcohol 24 hours before surgery.
- Stop hair treatments 5 days before your surgical procedure(s) if your defect is on your scalp.

## What do I need to buy before the procedure to care for my wound after surgery?

- Vaseline®
- Non-adherent gauze pad
- Bandage tape
- Q-tips®
- White vinegar
- Ice packs (see other sheet)
- Tylenol® (acetaminophen)

## What are my post-operative instructions?

### General guidelines:

- Have someone drive you home after surgery and help you at home for 1 day.
- Keep your head elevated for the first 2 nights after surgery, you can sleep with your head on 2-3 pillows or in a recliner.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Eat a balanced diet.
- Exercising less may lead to constipation, so you may want to add more raw fruit to your diet, and drink more fluids.
- Do not smoke, as smoking delays healing and increases the risk of complications.

### Managing your pain:

Post-operative pain is very minimal depending on the person. Most people will have good pain control with Tylenol alone (acetaminophen). You can take 1-2 tablets every 4-6 hours as needed for pain. **Do not take aspirin** or any products containing aspirin, unless approved by your surgeon.

- Take pain medication as prescribed.
- Do not drink alcohol when taking pain medications.
- Even when not taking pain medications, avoid alcohol for 3 weeks as it causes fluid buildup and delays healing.
- If you are taking vitamins with iron, resume these supplements as tolerated.

If you receive a narcotic (opioid) pain medication:

- Take it as prescribed with food to avoid upset stomach.
- Do not take the narcotic at the same time as Tylenol (acetaminophen) because most narcotics contain acetaminophen. **Do not exceed 3g (3000mg) of Tylenol (acetaminophen) in a 24-hour period.** If you have a liver condition your limit may be less than 4g, ask your doctor how much you can take.

**Taking care of your wound:**

- Keep the wound dry for 24 hours, unless advised otherwise.
- You may shower 24 hours after surgery. It is okay to get area wet after this time, though you may experience some stinging for the first few days.
- If you leave the house, you may temporarily cover the area with a bandage.
- Do not use any essential oils on the site.
- Clean the wound twice per day:
  - Remove bandage 24 hours after surgery, unless otherwise instructed. (If you receive Detachol (adhesive remover) please apply liquid to the tape and let it soak for 2-3 minutes and then peel off like a band-aid).
  - Wash hands with soap and water.
  - Clean the wound with a vinegar and water solution by using a cotton tip applicator or gauze. This will remove any crusting and help prevent a scab from forming.
  - To make the solution for soaking the wound mix 1 cup of water with 2 teaspoons of white vinegar. Refrigerate the leftover mixture for future use.
  - Pat dry
  - Fill in the wound with Vaseline ointment and cover with a light bandage.
- To decrease swelling, ice the area for 2 days after surgery. Rotate the ice 20 minutes on and 10 minutes off with a cloth between the ice pack and your skin.
- Avoid soaking or extreme heat (in bathtub, pools, hot tubs, sauna) for 3 weeks.
- You may use make-up, sunblock, and lotions after 3 weeks.
- You may resume shaving over the surgical area in 3 weeks.
- With scalp wounds: all hair color treatments should be planned at least 2 months after the procedure. Please note that you may have numbness of

your scalp and should use a hair dryer on a cool setting while frequently moving it around to avoid any burns to the scalp.

- You may massage the incision and use scar cream after 6-8 weeks.
- Avoid exposing scars to the sun for at least 6-12 months.
- Always use a strong sunblock if sun exposure is unavoidable (SPF 50 or greater).
- You will need to establish a permanent relationship with a local Dermatologist for periodic examination of your skin.

### **Is bleeding normal?**

A small amount of blood on the dressing is normal.

- If you have persistent bleeding, apply pressure for 10 minutes over the dressing and relax and recline.
- If you have fresh, red blood that saturates more than one gauze dressing pad every 10-20 minutes, please contact the clinic.

### **Your activity level:**

- Decrease your activity for the first **24 hours**. Activity increases the potential for bleeding and pain by increasing blood flow to the surgical site.
- Start walking **as soon as possible**. This helps to reduce swelling and lowers your risk of developing blood clots, pneumonia, and constipation.
- Return to work in **7 days**, unless otherwise specified by your doctor. Should your employer have specific forms they would like to have filled out, please bring them to the office as soon as possible.
- Avoid activities that raise your blood pressure such as bending at the waist, lifting over 10 pounds, and rigorous sports for **10 days**.
- You may resume exercising in **10 days** and swimming after **2 months**.
- Do not drive until you are no longer taking any prescribed narcotic pain medication.

## **What should I expect it to look like?**

- There may be swelling and bruising around the wound.
- The area may remain numb for several weeks or even months.
- You may also experience periodic shooting sensations near the wound as it heals.
- The edges of the wound will be dark pink at first. This will improve with time and will be less tender.

## **When should I call my doctor?**

**Call your doctor if you notice any of the following symptoms:**

- Increased swelling or bruising.
- Swelling and redness persist after a few days.
- Increased redness along the incision
- Severe or increased pain not relieved by medication.
- Side effects to medications including:
  - Rash
  - Nausea
  - Headache
  - Vomiting
  - Diarrhea
- Oral temperature over 101 degrees.
- Yellowish or greenish liquid from the incisions or foul odor.
- Bleeding from the incisions that is difficult to control with light pressure. In the event of life-threatening bleeding, call 911 or go to the emergency department.
- Loss of feeling or motion.

## Who should I call if I have questions?

- Monday - Friday, 9:00am - 5:00pm:
  - Call: (734) 432-7634 for patients of Dr. Brenner, Dr. Moyer, Dr. Rudy and fellow
  - Call (734) 998-6082 for patients of Dr. Stucken
  - Call: (734) 615-8838 for patients of Dr. Joseph, Dr. Kim and Dr. Rudy
  
- After hours and on weekends:
  - Call Hospital Paging at (734) 936-6267 and ask for the ENT Doctor on call.

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