



# Caring for Your Incision after Gynecologic Oncology Surgery

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## **How will my incision look following surgery?**

Your skin incision was closed during your surgery. The incision was sewn closed with small sutures that will dissolve over time. Small pieces of white tape (steri strips) were used to reinforce the stitches and cover over the incision. A bandage was placed over these with tape. This was likely removed while you are at the hospital.

The incision will look different than the skin surrounding it. While healing, the wound may look red or bruised near the incision. Over time, the incision will turn pink and may stay this color for up to a year.

## **What will happen to the sutures (stitches)?**

The sutures will dissolve on their own, so they do not need to be removed. They are absorbable (dissolvable) and may take 1-2 months for the sutures to dissolve. The incision may be itchy as this happens

## **How will I care for my incision at home?**

- Starting on the second day after surgery, shower daily with mild soap and water.
- Clean your incision for 4-5 days with Chlorhexidine solution.
  - this may make your skin orange, this is normal and temporary.
- Do not scrub your incision. Pat to dry.
- Do not soak or submerge your incision in water.
- Avoid tight clothing around the incision areas or fabrics which may irritate your skin.
- Keep the incision clean and dry. It does not need to be covered with a bandage.

- Your steri strips will start to fall off after a few days. If they are still on 7 days after the surgery take them off. It is ok if they fall off before 7 days.
- Avoid exposing scars to the sun for at least 12 months. Sun exposure can darken scars permanently, making them more noticeable. If sun exposure is unavoidable, always use a strong sunblock (SPF 30 or greater).

### **When should I call for help?**

- Inspect your incision daily for signs of infection including:
  - Increased redness around the incision
  - Increased tenderness or pain
  - Increased swelling
- Call your care team if you develop any of the following:
  - Signs of infection as described above
  - Any yellowish drainage or bleeding from the incision
  - Bad or smelly odor from the incision
  - Wound that looks like it has separated or opened

Also, call if you have any questions or concerns.

### **What is the number to call?**

- During business hours, Monday - Friday 8 am - 5 pm call Gynecology Oncology at 734-647-8906.
- After hours, on weekends or holidays call Michigan Medicine 734-936-4000 and ask to speak with the gynecologic oncology fellow on call.

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