

Surgery Frequently Asked Questions

Immediately after surgery

Q. Should I expect swelling? For how long?

A. Swelling is normal after surgery. Most swelling will go away in two weeks. For wounds near the eyes, the swelling can come and go for a couple of months. Any surgery done on the forehead can also cause swelling under and around the eyes. The eyes can often swell completely shut and you may have a black eye. THIS IS NORMAL. When surgery is performed on or around the lips, this can cause an exaggerated amount of swelling as well.

Q. Is swelling of the lower leg normal?

A. Yes, when doing surgery on a lower leg swelling is very common. This can last for weeks. You should elevate your leg as often as you can. You should wear compression stockings - this will help the wound heal faster.

Q. Should I sleep lying flat?

A. If you have a wound on the head/face you should elevate your head at night for 72 hours.

Q. Do I use Vaseline ointment on the sutured wound after I take the bandage off?

A. Yes, continue to apply Vaseline. You can also use normal soap, water, moisturizers and sunscreen.

Bandaging your open wound

Q. How do I apply the ointment? How much?

A. You can apply the ointment with a Q-tip or your clean fingertip. You should use a liberal amount of ointment. You DO NOT want your wound to dry out/scab.

Q. Can I use non-sterile Q-tips?

A. YES

Q. Do I shower with the bandage off or on?

A. You can do either. After a couple days, a mild soap will not hurt your wound.

When to stop bandaging open wound

Q. When can I stop bandaging my open wound?

A. When there is no drainage. The skin will look pink and shiny.

Tape

Q. Can I use any other kind of tape besides paper tape?

A. This is not recommended. Paper tape is more gentle on the skin than regular Band-Aids or adhesive tapes. This skin will often break down or get irritated by using regular Band-Aids/adhesives.

Ongoing wound healing

Q. How long do I massage?

A. You should massage the wound until the area feels like normal skin. This will vary from two to six months. You should only start massaging the wound 4-6 weeks after the initial surgery.

Q. How long will the scar be visible?

A. Any time you cut the skin there will be a scar. Scars mature over a period ranging from six months to eighteen months. As time goes by the scar will become less noticeable.