

**Family Dermatology**  
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**POST OP INSTRUCTIONS FOR PROCEDURES THAT REQUIRE STITCHES**

1. Take it easy. During the next 6 hours you are at the highest risk for post-op bleeding. Resting will help prevent blood and fluid from building up under the skin. If surgery is performed on the arms, legs, or feet, elevate the area as much as possible. Avoid bending over and lifting for the first 48 hours. Avoid strenuous activity and weightlifting until your stitches are taken out.
2. Your dressing should remain as dry as possible. Showers are acceptable. Avoid soaking in baths, soaking in hot tubs, or swimming. If the dressing accidentally gets wet or gets soaked by drainage, remove the dressing, wash with soap and water gently, apply Vaseline to cover all stitches, and cover with a bandage.
3. Pain: For mild discomfort use Tylenol or Extra Strength Tylenol every 4-6 hours if needed. For moderate discomfort, add ibuprofen 400mg every four hours as needed. If you have severe discomfort, call our office at 919-791-0840.
4. Bleeding: Expect a small amount of drainage and bleeding during the first 2-3 days. If you think the site is bleeding too much, hold firm, continuous pressure for 20 minutes without peeking. If it is still bleeding, remove the dressing and hold pressure for an additional 20 minutes with ice in a cloth or with a bag of frozen peas or corn. If it continues, maintain pressure and call our office. Once bleeding stops, replace the dressing. Too much activity may increase bleeding.
5. Wound Care: Once a day, wash the site gently with soap and water, apply Vaseline jelly, and cover with a bandage. Do not let the wound dry out. That slows healing and increases scarring. Do not use Neosporin. Vaseline jelly beats Neosporin handily for surgical wound care. Do not use hydrogen peroxide. It delays healing.
6. Swelling and Bruising: This is to be expected, especially on the face, hands, legs, feet, areas with loose skin, and areas with sun damage. The swelling or bruising may increase in the first 2-3 days. Small ice packs used 2-5 minutes at a time may decrease swelling. A bag of frozen peas works well for this. Break the peas apart from each other before using.
7. Redness: Redness or swelling the size of a quarter can be a sign of infection, especially if it is tender. Call the office if this occurs. Some redness is normal. Usually it is rectangular, following the line of stiches. The skin edges may even get a little puffy. This is normal. Redness under the edges of bandages can be tape rash. If this happens, switch to paper tape and gauze pads or Telfa pads. All pharmacies carry these items.
8. Itching may occur. If you get intense itching or small blisters, stop any antibiotic ointment, use Vaseline jelly instead, and call the office.
9. Smoking: Try to reduce smoking to help your wound heal, especially if it is on your face.

**You should hear from us within a week about your biopsy results. If you do not hear from us, please contact our office at 919-791-0840.**

IF EVER IN DOUBT, CALL OUR OFFICE AT 919-791-0840.