**Family Dermatology**

**Diseases and Surgery of the Skin, Hair, and Nails**

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**POST-OP INSTRUCTIONS FOR PROCEDURES THAT REQUIRE STITCHES**

1. Take it easy. During the next 6 hours you are at high 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 strenuous activities and lifting for the first 48 hours. While you have stitches in, any vigorous activity can make your scar worse.
2. Your dressing should remain as dry as possible. Showers are acceptable. Avoid soaking in baths or swimming. If the dressing gets wet or soaked by drainage, remove the dressing, wash with soap and water gently, apply Vaseline jelly (or Polysporin or bacitracin if the wound is on the lower half of the body), and cover with a bandage.
3. Pain: You may take Tylenol and ibuprofen as needed and may take both at the same time. If you have severe discomfort, call our office at (919) 791-0840.
4. Bleeding: A small amount of drainage and bleeding during the first 72 hours is expected. If the site is bleeding too much, hold firm 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 a bag of frozen peas or corn. If it continues, maintain pressure and call our office.
5. Wound Care: Apply Vaseline petroleum jelly (or, if instructed to do so, Polysporin or bacitracin) to the site after gently washing with soap and water daily, then cover with a bandage until suture removal. Don’t let it dry out, as that tends to make scars worse. Keeping the area covered promotes healing and prevents scab formation. Do not use hydrogen peroxide daily. It delays healing.
6. Swelling/Bruising: This is expected. The swelling or bruising may increase in the first 72 hours. Rest. Avoid bending over and picking things up. Avoid lifting. Small ice packs used for 5 minutes may reduce swelling and discomfort. A bag of frozen peas works well.
7. Redness: Redness or swelling reaches the diameter of a quarter may be a sign of infection, particularly if it is tender. Call the office if this happens. Normal redness is usually rectangular, following the suture line. The skin edges may even get a little puffy – this is normal. Itching is normal, but if you have intense itching or small blisters, call the office.
8. Smoking: Please continue to stop smoking for 3 days after your surgery.

**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.**