

Skin Surgery Clinic

Nurses

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Normal Healing After Skin Surgery

Swelling, Bruising, Redness

Normal: Swelling, bruising and redness may continue for days to weeks after the stitches are removed. This is a normal part of healing.

Abnormal: If the wound becomes more red, tender or swollen after one to two days, please notify us or consult with your family physician. Remember, the wound will be red, tender and swollen after surgery, but this should start to improve after 1-2 days, **not get worse!**

Colour

Early on the wound will be pink-red, then may become purplish in colour. This should start to improve over days to weeks. The colour of the wound may take many months to return to a more normal appearance.

Scars

Normal: All breaks in the skin result in scarring. The goal of surgery is to minimize the amount and hide these scars as much as possible. Proper wound care is very important in minimizing scarring. Scars will continue to improve up to 18 months after surgery.

Abnormal: If your wound continues to be raised, red, thick or tender after this period, contact your doctor regarding methods to reduce this "over-scarring".

Wound Protection

Healed wounds are more sensitive to the sunlight, temperature and injury. It is important to be careful to protect your healing wound to excessive temperatures (cold and heat), direct sunlight, and trauma.

Numbness, Itching

Wounds are often numb and itchy for weeks to months after surgery. This is normal, and because the nerves are attempting to grow into the healing area.

Dissolvable Stitches

"Under-stitches" are used to reduce tension on the healing wound, and will be dissolved by the body over a period of weeks to months. It is common for the wound to "spit" parts of the stitch through the wound during this process. Remnants of dissolvable stitches may be trimmed with scissors if they are bothersome.

Applying Products to Wounds

Anything may be applied to the healed wound, usually 4-7 days after the stitches are removed. Sunscreen is encouraged. Make-up is also safe. Avoid using products that irritate the area. Vitamin E cream may be used as long as it doesn't cause redness or irritation.