

Optimal Wound Care - Dissolvable Sutures with Steri-strips **What you need to know to minimize scarring**

Poor nutritional status, smoking, early over-activity, some medications (ie. prednisone, methotrexate) or a predilection to hypertrophic or keloid scars can adversely affect wound healing. As well, some areas of the body inherently scar better than others. The thin-skinned eyelid for instance, often scars much more favorably than the back, which has a much thicker dermal, or deeper skin layer. Despite this, there is much we can do ourselves to positively influence the healing process.

All wounds heal in distinct phases – each phase requiring a different treatment regime. The information below outlines Dr. Dawes’ specific instructions to help ensure a nicely healed wound and minimize unsightly scarring.

Day 0 – 14

Your wound has been closed using two layers of dissolvable sutures and outer steri-strip bandages. You may also have an additional, outer dressing. The outer dressing (only) may be removed tomorrow. The steri-strips are to remain in-tact.

On the day after your surgery, you may remove and discard the outer dressing. You may shower normally, however, do not scrub or wash over the steri-strips directly. Rather, let the soap and water run over the wound. Once out of the shower, gently pat the steri-strips dry with a towel.

After 7-10 days, the steri-strips may start to peel off. If not off completely by 12 days, or if they start to appear ‘mucky’, you may remove them yourself. Though it is not necessary, you may choose to cover the steri-strips with a bandage.

After the steri-strips have been removed you will see clear sutures come from either end of the wound. These may either be left to fall off, or trimmed at the skin with clean scissors.

Do

- Remove the outer dressing the day after surgery
- Shower normally, allowing the soap and water to run over the wound
- Pat the steri-strips dry after the surgery
- You may or may not wish to cover the steri-strips with a light dressing
- Trim the clear end of the sutures if sticking out

Do Not

- Apply an anti-bacterial ointment (ie. Polysporin), cream or moisturizer to the steri-strips
- Remove the steri-strips prior to 10 days after your surgery
- Engage in any strenuous physical activity

Day 15 – 21

During this time, your wound will begin to increase in strength. Optimal wound healing occurs best in moist conditions, rendering a good moisturizer key. You should also keep the wound clean using a gentle cleanser at least twice daily.

Do

- Continue to cleanse area at least twice daily
- Apply a good moisturizer (available at our office)
- May cover with a sterile bandage or leave open to air

Do Not

- Apply an anti-bacterial ointment
- Massage

Gentle Cleanser by SkinCeuticals is formulated for dry, sensitive or traumatized skin. It removes excess impurities and oil without drying the skin. It is non-irritating and gentle enough to be used several times a day.

Ideal for use after plastic surgery or dermatologic procedures, Epidermal Repair by SkinCeuticals is formulated to help repair compromised skin by facilitating the rapid restoration of its barrier function. It helps to relieve and rehabilitate sensitive skin while diminishing redness due to inflammation.

Day 21 – 1 Year

By 3 weeks, your wound should look well healed. However, for up to 1-2 years, the scar will continue to 'mature' as your wound continues to remodel and strengthen. Until then, the scar may continue to look red and/or raised.

Scarring is inevitable. Fortunately however, you can often influence the extent of the scar. Frequent massage facilitates equilibration of deposited collagen and re-alignment of the collagen fibers within the scar. Silicone helps to maintain a barrier, which both raises the temperature of the scar as well as increases the oxygen tension around it, thus providing an optimal environment for scar remodeling.

Do

- Continue to cleanse area daily
- Continue to use a good moisturizer daily (ie. Epidermal Repair – SkinCeuticals)
- Massage frequently, as firm as you can tolerate
- Use silicone sheeting/gel (ie. Scar Heal) as directed (available at our office)
- Use a high quality sunscreen/UV protection (which can be purchased from our office)

Do Not

- Use Vitamin E or other non-proven scar treatments

Scar-Heal gel, sheeting and creams are silicone-containing, professional-grade products that help to moisturize, raise the temperature of and increase the oxygen tension within scars. The result is an optimal environment for wound care healing. Regular use as directed can help to neutralize scar colour and flatten raised areas.

All products mentioned here are available for purchase at our office location: 102-47 Sunpark Drive SE or online at www.beautifulnaturalyou.ca. If you have additional questions about product, please call our office at (403) 571-3141.