JEFFREY C. DAWES M.D. FRCSC
PLASTIC AND DERMATOLOGIC SURGERY

Optimal Wound Care – Normal Incisions

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 – 4

This stage of wound healing is characterized by an un-healed wound. The outer skin barrier (epidermis) is not intact, resulting in a wound that is painful and prone to infection.

Do

- Wash daily with a mild cleanser and water
- Apply a thin layer of anti-bacterial ointment (ie. Polysporin, Bactroban, fucidin) after each cleansing
- Cover with a sterile non-stick dressing (ie.telfa) to avoid wound contamination, and tape in place

Do Not

- Apply a non-steroid or non-anti-bacterial ointment or cream (ie. a moisturizer)
- Take anti-inflammatories (ie. Advil, Motrin) unless instructed
- Leave open to air
- 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.

Day 5 – 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. At this stage, an anti-bacterial ointment is no longer necessary. Too much anti-bacterial ointment can break down the tissue, prolonging the wound healing process.

Do

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

Do Not

- Continue to apply an anti-bacterial ointment
- Massage

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. Epidermal Repair can be purchased at our office.

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 as directed (available at our office)
- Use a high quality sunscreen/UV protection (available at our office)

Do Not

- Use Vitamin E or other non-proven scar treatments

Scar-Heal gel, sheeting and cream 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.