

## What should I do if my wound becomes infected?

As with any surgical procedure, there is a risk of infection. If this occurs, it generally happens within three to seven days following the operation. Signs to look for are increase in pain, redness, heat, swelling and/or leakage of pus / blood stained fluid.

If you notice these symptoms or you are concerned please contact your GP for advice.

## When can I expect to receive the results of my skin surgery?

We may contact you by telephone, by offering you another appointment or by letter, to provide you with your histology results. This usually is within 3 - 8 weeks. However, if you have not received your results after 8 weeks, then please contact the Dermatology Unit on **0300 019 5465**, so that we may investigate the matter.

## Who do I contact if I need any further advice?

For non-urgent advice you can contact the dermatology nurses by leaving an answerphone message - including your name, hospital number (or date of birth), and telephone number - by calling the Dermatology Resource Unit, Christchurch Hospital on **0300 019 5471** (messages are collected Monday to Friday only).

To read this leaflet in a different language, please visit our website: [www.uhd.nhs.uk/visit/patient-information-leaflets](http://www.uhd.nhs.uk/visit/patient-information-leaflets) and use the language and accessibility function available along the top of the site.

To ask for this leaflet in larger print, please contact the patient experience team on **0300 019 8499** or email [uhd.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net](mailto:uhd.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net).

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# Skin flap wound care

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Dermatology Minor Skin Surgery

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This leaflet is to help explain the post operative care for patients who have had a skin flap procedure.

## What does a skin flap involve?

Skin flap surgery uses skin and tissue near the wound, to cover and close the wound.

## When and where will the dressings be removed?

A dressing would have been applied to your wound.

You can:

- Remove the dressing yourself**, in: ..... hours.  
When you remove the dressing, the wound may appear swollen and bruised; this is normal and will resolve in a few days.  
Meanwhile, clean the area with warm water, pat dry with a clean towel. Avoid using any soap products. Then, leave the area open to the air, as it will heal more quickly.
- Attend the Dermatology Resource Unit** to have the dressing attended to on:

..... at: .....

## When and where will the stitches be removed?

- GP Surgery/Practice Nurse** in: ..... days.
- Dermatology Resource Unit** on:
- ..... at: .....
- District Nurse** will visit your home in: ..... days.  
Please telephone your GP surgery to confirm this appointment.
- External dissolvable stitches** (Vicryl Rapide stitches)  
These stitches will start to dissolve in approximately 7-10 days. You may gently wash the area once the dressing has been removed, but do not soak it.

## After the stitches have been removed what should I do?

One week after the stitches have been removed, if there are no signs of infection, and the wound has closed together, massage clean Vaseline™ into the scar twice a day. This is to help ease the scarring and encourage any internal stitches to dissolve. This can be applied for up to two to three months. Keep the area out of the sun.

## How do I care for my wound?

To help minimise the risk of bleeding, infection and/or the wound from coming open (dehiscence), after your surgery, please:

- Immediately after the procedure and for the remainder of the day rest up, avoiding any strenuous activities. A further period of reduced activity may also be appropriate and would have been discussed with you after your procedure.
- Where appropriate raise the treated area. For example, if surgery was performed on your leg, when sitting raise it up on a stool. If on the head, when lying down an extra pillow in bed is advisable.
- If surgery was performed on your neck or head, please avoid for at least 24 to 48 hours, alcohol, very hot spicy food, very hot drinks, prolonged stooping (lowering your head) and vigorous exercise.
- Protect all treated areas from direct sunlight

## What should I do if I feel any discomfort?

It is normal for your wound to feel sore following skin surgery, especially when the local anaesthetic wears off (approximately in 2 to 4 hours). We suggest you take a pain killer (analgesic) such as Paracetamol when you get home, and then as required up to the maximum permitted dose. However, do not take any Aspirin or NSAIDS for example Ibuprofen (unless already prescribed by your GP) to minimise the risk of further bleeding.

## What should I do if my wound bleeds?

Occasionally your wound may bleed after surgery. If this happens, leave the dressing in place and apply continuous pressure over the dressing for 5 - 10 minutes and raise the area that is bleeding. If required, apply another dressing on top.

However, if you have excessive bleeding and it does not stop, contact the Dermatology Unit: **0300 019 5285**, Monday - Friday 9am to 4:30pm. After those hours, please attend your local Emergency Department.