

Instructions for Incision Care

After surgery, incisions are typically covered with a dressing (not all) and should be left in place for as long as your surgeon instructs you to do (unless dressing changes are needed and will be discussed with your surgeon). Incisions may have skin glue, stitches, or staples (this will be removed in the clinic). In some cases, there may not be anything to remove (stitches that are under the skin). Proper wound healing is critical to the success of your recovery. It is important to keep your incision clean and dry following your surgery.

General Instructions:

1. After surgery, the affected area will be a little swollen. It is common for there to be some bruising and mild redness around your incision.
2. Do not soak the incision in water (bathtub, pool, hot tub, lake, river, ocean) for up to 6 weeks after surgery.
3. A nurse will talk to you about your care of your incision per your surgeon's instructions and if you can shower.
4. Ask *your surgeon* about the first dressing change **BEFORE** you leave the hospital (usually this is done in the clinic). **Each surgeon will have a slightly different way to manage your post-operative incisions.**
5. *If* your surgeon says it is ok to change your dressing, always wash your hands thoroughly **BEFORE** and **AFTER** changing your dressing and follow their instructions.
6. Call your surgeon if your incision has severe swelling with a lot of tenderness that does not improve each day, you are experiencing severe discomfort/fatigue/pain, you have sudden increase in drainage that becomes gray or yellowish with foul smelling odor, or you have a temperature greater than 101.6 ° F (38.7 ° C) that does not improve.