

Post-op Incision Care Instructions for Musculoskeletal Oncology Patients

It is important that you follow the directions given to you by your doctor. If you have any questions about your incision care, call your doctor.

Below are the different ways to close a wound after surgery and wound care instructions for each type. Most incisions will be covered by a dressing after surgery. Each type of dressing has different instructions.

A member of your health care team will put a (✓) in the box by the type of dressing used for your incision and how to care for it:

Dry gauze:

- This dressing should stay in place for 3 days after surgery.
- After 3 days, you can remove the dressing and cover the incision with a clean dry gauze dressing.
- This dressing needs to be changed each day until your follow-up appointment with your doctor.
- If you are “soaking” through the dressing you may need to change it more often.
- **Do not** get your dressing or incision wet.
- **Do not** use any creams, lotions, ointments or powders on or around the incision.

Silver dressing (Mepilex):

- This dressing is filled with silver, which is a natural antimicrobial substance.
- This dressing should stay in place for 7 days after surgery.

This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

- After 7 days, you can remove the dressing and cover the incision with a new mepilex dressing which was given to you at discharge. The second mepilex dressing should stay on for 7 days. After 7 days, it can be removed and replaced with a dry gauze dressing. Change the dry gauze dressing every day until your follow up appointment.
- Make sure that you have enough dressings to last you until your follow-up appointment.
- **Do not** get your dressing or incision wet.
- **Do not** use any creams, lotions, ointments or powders on or around the incision.

What may be under the dressing:

A member of your health care team will put a (✓) in the box by what was used to close your incision:

- Mesh (Prineo):** A mesh type dressing is put directly over your skin and will stay in place for 3 weeks or longer. The mesh may need to be trimmed at the edges until it completely falls off.
 - You may get this dressing wet in the shower **after** you remove the outer dressing **and** are told by your health care team that you may get it wet.
 - **Do not** use any creams, lotions, ointments or powders on or around the incision.
- Steri-strips:** These small paper tapes cross over the incision to help keep the edges of the incision closed.
 - **Do not** remove the strips, they will fall off on their own in about 1 to 2 weeks.
 - **Do not** get your dressing or incision wet.
 - **Do not** use any creams, lotions, ointments or powders on or around the incision. You may shower **after** your follow-up appointment.
- Staples:** If staples are used, they will be removed at your follow-up appointment.
 - If your doctor feels your incision needs more time to heal, they may not be removed at this appointment.
 - **Do not** get your dressing or incision wet.
 - **Do not** use any creams, lotions, ointments or powders on or around the incision. You may shower after your staples are removed.

- **Sutures:** If sutures are used, they will be removed at your follow-up appointment. If your doctor feels that your incision needs more time to heal, they may not be removed at this appointment.
 - **Do not** get your dressing or incision wet.
 - **Do not** use any creams, lotions, ointments or powders on or around the incision.
 - You may shower **after** your sutures have been removed.

- **Nothing:** Some incisions are closed with sutures that are underneath the skin and dissolve on their own. You may be able to see the clear fishing line like suture at both ends of the incision. These will be cut close to the skin when you come for your follow-up appointment.
 - **Do not** get your incision wet.
 - **Do not** use any creams, lotions, ointments or powders on or around the incision.
 - You may shower **after** your follow-up appointment.

When to call your doctor:

- Call the office with any questions or concerns at 614-293-4420. If you are calling after hours, press 0 to speak with the operator and ask for the orthopaedic resident on call.
- A fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) or higher
- Redness, heat or swelling at the incision area
- Increased bleeding or any pus coming from the incision area