



Wound care after surgery

Information for patients from Day Surgery

How do I care for my dressing at home?

After your surgery, a dressing will be covering your wound. **Do not get it wet!**

You may be given a pressure dressing which should be kept on for 24 hours.

How long do I keep the dressing on for?

Keep your wound covered with a dressing for 48 hours, or longer if told to by Day Surgery staff. If your dressing is firmly stuck it is ok to soak it off but do not be rough. After three or four days a dressing is not normally needed.

How do I care for my wound once I have removed my dressing?

- Wash your hands.
- Wash your wound carefully with clean water.
- Try and gently remove any dried blood or scabs.
- Pat your wound dry.
- **Maxillo Facial patients only.** When dry, cover your wound thickly with vaseline or polyfax ointment. The ointment will keep your wound clean, soft, and moist. Do not use antiseptic liquid/cream unless told to keep your wound dry.
- Apply a plaster and make sure that this is attached to the surrounding skin (if advised to do so).



What if my wound bleeds at home?

It is normal for there to be a little oozing or bleeding at the site of the surgery in the first few hours. This can be controlled by pressing firmly on your wound for 15 minutes.

Although you will not be sent home with a bleeding wound, occasionally minor oozing or bleeding may happen later. This can usually be controlled by pressing firmly on your wound for 30 minutes. If your dressing gets soggy it may need to be replaced.

What if my wound hurts? Can I take painkillers?

If your wound is painful, paracetamol every four to six hours usually helps, and discomfort should improve over the next few days. If it doesn't, and your wound becomes more painful, please contact your GP as you may have got an infection which will need antibiotics.

When can I return to my normal activities?

Avoid strenuous exercise, bending, or heavy lifting for several days after your surgery. This can cause bleeding into your wound, or splitting of the stitches.

Avoid smoking completely for the first week after surgery. Studies have shown that wound healing is significantly delayed by smoking, and the infection rate is much higher.

If I have had stitches, when will they be removed?

- Dissolvable stitches do not need to be removed.
- If you have stitches that do need removing, you can contact your hospital/GP nurse in _____ days and they can do this for you.

When will I get my results?

Normally results take four weeks to come back from the laboratory, longer if special tests are needed. You may be given a follow-up appointment to discuss these.

For minor procedures you may receive your results in the post. This letter can take several weeks to arrive, so please be patient. Your GP will be sent a copy of the letter.

Will I need further treatment?

Sometimes a second procedure may be needed, depending on your results.

How will I feel once my wound has healed?

- Your scar will be very red and firm at first, but will gradually become paler over time.
- The area around your wound may be numb for several weeks or months; this is normal.
- You may feel occasional sharp pains or 'twinges' near the scar as it settles.
- Your skin will not regain full strength for several months.

What should I do if I have any concerns or questions?

If you have any queries or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Day Surgery on the numbers below or your GP.

- Channel Day Surgery, **William Harvey Hospital**, Ashford
Telephone: 01233 61 62 63 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)
- Canterbury Day Surgery Centre, **Kent and Canterbury Hospital**, Canterbury
Telephone: 01227 78 31 14 (7:30am to 8pm)
Telephone: 07887 68 76 45 (8pm to 7:30am)
- Day Surgery Unit, **Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital**, Margate
Telephone: 01843 23 44 99 (7:30am to 8pm)
Telephone: 07887 65 11 62 (8pm to 7:30am)

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 78 31 45, or email ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net

Patients should not bring in large sums of money or valuables into hospital. Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property had been handed in to Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals web site www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patientinformation