

Post-Operative Instructions - Destruction of Benign or Malignant Growths

These are instructions for open wounds follow burning, freezing, or shaving of a skin growth or lesion. These should heal a scrape or skin abrasion would heal. Following the below directions should speed up healing, limit scarring and prevent infection. Studies show that wounds covered with a dressing and ointment heal faster than uncovered wounds. The “old wives tale” that wounds heal faster if left open to the air is wrong -- if care is taken to avoid infection. A thin rim of red is normal around an open wound. About 3 in 100 wounds will become infected no matter what you or the doctor does. If you are not certain if your wound is healing correctly, please call us.

Remove your bandage within 24 hours. Afterwards you may wash the area gently with mild soap and tap water twice daily. If you are prone to infections use antibacterial soap (lever 2000) and rinse with sterile saline (the type for contact lenses). A non-stick bandage can be worn during the day. Put a dab of antibiotic ointment (Bacitracin, Polysporin) under the bandage, and again at bedtime. You can take tylenol, Advil or Nuprin for the pain.

To get the best cosmetic results, until the areas are healed (one to two months), avoid sun completely between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Rearrange your schedule so you do “inside things” during these hours. Thick, lumpy, or itchy scars sometimes occur. If you are prone to these, keep a piece of tan “Micropore paper tape” over the scar once it is healed for 3 months. If thick scars occur anyway, we can treat them. The tape will also block out sunlight. Understand there is no tan color under a lesion, because the lesion has shielded the underlying skin from the sun. When the lesion is removed, the underlying skin will be the same color as the buttock skin. You can color these spots in with sunless tanning lotion.

Never pick off or scrub off any scabs or blisters; because this will remove pigment cells resulting in a permanent white scar.

You can expect the scabs to fall off in one week (face, scalp and ears) or two to three (neck, chest, hands, arms and back) or six to eight (thighs, legs and feet). If the treated spot returns, re-treatment will be needed. If the skin around the wound becomes red, swollen and painful, you may have an infection. Call and inform the doctor about this. It is normal for the wound to drain small amounts of clear or red fluid. If the wound drains white-yellow fluid or pus call us immediately. Failure to call about an infected wound can have serious consequences. All patients with skin cancer should be re-examined every 6 months for at least several years, and use sun protection such as a hat and sunscreen rated at least spf 15.