Member
AMERICAN SOCIETY OF PLASTIC SURGEONS

KIRWAN
PLASTIC SURGERY

THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR AESTHETIC PLASTIC SURGERY

Pre & Postoperative Instructions Management of Skin Wounds

Your facial wound has been repaired and sutured with great care to promote the best possible result. Interrupted sutures in the face are removed two to five days after surgery. After that the wound is supported with Steri-strips or 'fine mesh gauze and collodion' skin glue to prevent stretching of the wound. These dressings stay on for 48 hours or longer and are changed as necessary. The exception is when the stitch extends beneath the skin and is a so called "sub-cuticular" stitch. This kind of suture can be left in longer because it does not leave stitch marks. It comes out at approximately four to ten days after the surgery, depending on its location. Stitches in the trunk or extremities are usually left in for at least seven to ten days or longer, depending on the amount of skin tension on the wound.

After all the stitches are out, the wound should be protected from the sun with a sun block (sun protection factor 15 or greater) until the scar is no longer red. Redness fades over six to eighteen months. If the scar is exposed to the sun prematurely, it may tan and remain pigmented after the surrounding tan has faded. Normal medications which help wound healing are multi-vitamin preparations and Vitamin C (1500 milligrams a day). If you smoke, remember that each cigarette consumes 100 milligrams of Vitamin C. A high protein diet is also helpful. A non-allergenic moisturizing lotion is recommended to keep the tissue supple and to use when indoors. Avoid scented preparations. We recommend Skinade to help collagen regeneration and Silicone based topical products such as Stratamed and Strataderm.

It is important that the wound is kept dry in the first two weeks after surgery. If the stitches are wet, water can track along the suture line into the wound and cause an infection. Do not disturb the dressings, allow Dr. Kirwan or his nurse to change them as necessary. If there are signs or symptoms such as redness, swelling, pain or a discharge, please call the office.

We can guarantee that we will do our best to take care of you and insure the best result. However, we cannot guarantee how your wound will heal. Sometimes a scar that is repaired well and looks good in the early period after an injury may later become widened or raised. A raised scar is called a "keloid" scar. Keloid scars can be treated with one or more Injections of steroid. Also, if you miss your follow-up appointments your result may be worse.

After all stitches are out, you will be given a follow-up visit four weeks later. The reason for seeing you at this time is to check for keloid formation. A final follow-up visit is usually scheduled four months later or six months after the original repair after this.

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