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**Care of the Biopsy Site**

**Shave Biopsy**

1) Keep the area covered and dry for 24 hours.
2) The following day, wash the area with soap and water. Do not use hydrogen peroxide, iodine, or alcohol on the wound as this will slow down wound healing.
3) Gently dry the area and apply a small amount of Aquaphor healing ointment. Since many patients develop an allergic reaction to topical antibiotic ointments and studies show that it does not improve scars or reduce infection rates, Dr. Haley does not recommend use of these ointments.
4) Cover the site with a bandage for 4-5 days until the wound is healed. If the area is on the face, just keeping a small layer of ointment over the wound is fine.
5) Expect the site to be pink for up to 6-9 months. Then, it should gradually fade into a skin-colored or white scar.

**Punch Biopsy**

1) Follow the steps above but leave the bandage on until the sutures are removed.
2) Return to clinic for suture removal unless absorbable sutures were placed.

**Excision**

The importance of post operative care of your surgical site cannot be overstressed. The better you take care of yourself and your wound, the faster the healing and the lower chance of complications like infection and thick scarring. Eating a good diet and taking a multivitamin with some extra Vitamin C (500 mg) can be very helpful. Avoid stretching and straining the area of surgery and avoid smoking as this will significantly impair wound healing.

Post-operative issues that may arise:

**Bleeding** – to minimize this risk, limit activities for 24-48 hours after surgery, keep the surgery site elevated, avoid straining, sleep on an extra pillow if the surgery was done on your face or upper body, avoid alcohol, aspirin, and ibuprofen for 48 hours. If bleeding occurs, elevate the site and hold firm pressure for 20 minutes without interruption over the bandage.
**Swelling** – apply an ice bag or bag of frozen peas or corn for 20 minutes each hour for the first 5 hours.

**Pain** – Pain post-operatively is generally mild. Take 2 extra strength Tylenol (acetaminophen) every 4-6 hours if needed, but do not take aspirin or ibuprofen as this will increase your risk of bleeding complications.

1) Keep the wound dry for 48 hours with the bandage intact.
2) Clean the wound daily with gently soap and water. Do not use hydrogen peroxide, iodine, or alcohol which may inhibit wound healing.
3) Gently dry the area with a clean cloth and apply a small amount of Aquaphor healing ointment. Since many patients develop an allergic reaction to topical antibiotic ointments and studies show that it does not improve scars or reduce infection rates, Dr. Haley does not recommend use of these ointments.
4) Cover with a bandage daily until the sutures are removed.
5) Return to the clinic for suture removal.

**When to be concerned:**
1) If bleeding does not stop after 20 minutes uninterrupted pressure.
2) If there is a lump (golf-ball size) under the site. This could be a collection of blood (hematoma) and will need to be evaluated.
3) Signs of infection – worsening pain, swelling, redness, yellowish drainage several days after surgery.

Please call our office at 252-7444 if you have any concerns.

**Scar:** There will be a scar after surgery. This will decrease as the healing process continues but may take a full year for a scar to fully mature. Everyone heals differently and the final scar will depend on the individual’s ability to heal. Some people will heal from surgery without a trace; others will have scars that are raised, red, or itchy (hypertrophic scars). Scars are more likely to be hypertrophic in predisposed individuals and in areas of the body that are under tension (jaw, chest, shoulders, upper back). If this happens, return to the clinic and we may be able to inject it to flatten its appearance and minimize any associated itching and tenderness.