

Caring for your curettage or CO2 laser resurfacing wound

Dr Saqib Bashir

Introduction

There is no single best way to care for a surgical wound, although research and technology allow us to advise and modify wound care for individual patients. The advice given in this leaflet represents the ideal care for a surgical excision of skin, to provide optimum healing and minimal scarring. Your care plan may be tailored to your individual circumstances.

Immediate post operative care

The wound has been dressed with specialist dressings at the time of the operation. Keep these dressings dry for 24 - 48 hours after the biopsy, as advised. After this time, the dressing should be removed and the wound washed.

Washing the wound

You should wash the wound as follows:

- Remove the dressing gently: if it's stuck, don't pull it - soak it off with water
- Have a normal shower (or bath) allowing the wound to get wet
- Wash off any blood clots around the wound
- Do not scrub the wound
- Use plain water, or, if prescribed, a prescribed cleanser: avoid tcp/dettol or savlon
- Dry the skin gently with clean towel
- Apply plain Vaseline to the wound, or a prescribed ointment
- Dress the wound as directed - see below

Dressing the wound

Once the wound has been washed, it can be dressed again.

A. Ointment dressings

Awkward wounds such as the scalp, eyelids or genitals may simply have an ointment as a dressing. This should be applied several times daily to prevent the wound from drying up. Either use Vaseline or a prescribed ointment.

B. Simple dressings

Most wounds have a simple dressing consisting of a layer of Vaseline or prescribed ointment, then a plaster with an absorbent pad applied on top. Dr Bashir will tell you how often to change your dressings. In most cases a simple plaster will suffice, unless you have been instructed otherwise.

This process of washing and dressing the wound should be repeated daily until the wound has healed or the sutures have been removed.

What to expect...

Your wound will initially be red, then become swollen over a period of a few hours after the biopsy. This swelling may take about 2-4 weeks to settle. Wounds which are well looked after and covered with a dressing tend to be less red and swollen. At each dressing change the wound may appear moist - this is normal, and a sign of a healthy wound. Excessively wet wounds, which are red and painful may indicate infection and should be assessed by Dr Bashir's team or a healthcare professional. Healing of curettage and CO2 laser wounds is usually excellent and straightforward.