

Caring for your punch biopsy wound

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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.

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.

Stitch removal

Your biopsy wound may have been stitched closed, glued, or simply left open to heal by itself. Wounds that have been glued or which have dissolving stitches do not need to have anything removed, although you may be booked for a wound check. Most stitched wounds will require to have the stitches removed and you will be advised when this should be.