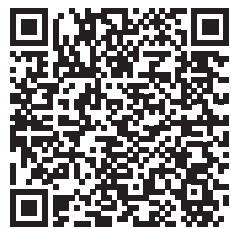


# Dressing Change/ Incision Care

**An incision is the cut in your skin made during your surgery.**

**The incision may be sewn closed (stitches), glued, stapled, or taped.**

**Taking care of your incision after your surgery is important to reducing the chance of getting an infection and helping you to return to normal sooner.**



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# Instructions and Q&A



## 1 Can I take a bath when I get home?

- DO NOT take a bath, sit in a hot tub, or get into a swimming pool.
- DO NOT soak your incision in water.
- YOU CAN take a shower beginning two days after your surgery.

## 2 When should I remove the dressing?

- REMOVE the dressing two (2) days after your surgery. Steps 3 and 4 are instructions for removing the dressing, cleaning your incision and replacing your dressing.
- DO NOT REMOVE any small strips across your incision (“Steri Strips”). Let them fall off on their own.

## 3 What are the steps I should follow to remove the dressing?

- CLEAN YOUR HANDS either by washing your hands with soap and water or using waterless hand sanitizer.
- LOOSEN THE TAPE around the dressing using alcohol on a cotton ball to dab the edges of the tape until it comes loose.
- NEVER tug on or rip off tape or dressing.
- REMOVE THE DRESSING slowly. If the dressing sticks to your incision put clean warm water on a cotton ball and dab the dressing until it comes loose. Never pull on the dressing.
- CHECK the dressing. If the dressing has a foul smell or if pus is coming from your incision, call your doctor.
- DISCARD the old dressing in the trash and clean your hands again.

## 4 My doctor told me to clean my incision and then to replace the dressing. How do I do that?

- TO CLEAN YOUR INCISION and REPLACE YOUR DRESSING gather a

clean, wash rag/cloth a bath towel, and a clean dressing/gauze and tape. The wash rag/cloth and bath towel should be freshly washed.

- CLEAN YOUR INCISION EVERY OTHER DAY using plain soap on the clean, wet wash rag/cloth. Gently soap your incision to remove any old blood or drainage. Do not scrub your incision.
- RINSE YOUR INCISION using the rinsed wash rag/cloth, gently remove the soap. Do not rub hard.
- PAT YOUR INCISION DRY using the clean bath towel.
- DO NOT USE alcohol, peroxide, or iodine to clean your incision.
- DO NOT APPLY lotions, creams, or herbal remedies to your incision.
- PLACE a clean dressing/gauze over your incision, being careful not to touch your incision. Secure the dressing/gauze with tape.

## 5 How do I manage my incision when taking a shower?

- BEFORE EACH SHOWER gather a clean wash rag/cloth, a bath towel, underclothes (underwear and bra) and clothes. These should be freshly washed.
- TAKE A SHOWER, not a bath, beginning two days after your surgery.
- KEEP YOUR DRESSING DRY by covering the dressing and the area around the dressing with a clean plastic bag or clear, plastic wrap.
- REMOVE the plastic bag or clear, plastic wrap after your shower and discard.
- CHANGE YOUR DRESSING AGAIN if you notice that the dressing has gotten damp or wet during your shower.
- WEAR newly washed underclothes (underwear, bra) and clothes.

## 6 What if I cannot shower?

- TAKE A SPONGE BATH every day beginning two days after you get home.
- BEFORE EACH SPONGE BATH gather a clean wash rag/cloth, a bath towel, underclothes (underwear and bra) and clothes. These should be freshly washed.
- FOR YOUR SPONGE BATH sit in a chair. Use plain soap on a clean, wet wash rag/cloth to gently soap your body starting with your face, then your neck, chest and back, arms, underarms, legs and then your private parts. Rinse the wash rag/cloth and then wipe the soap off of your body.
- DRY YOUR BODY using the clean bath towel.
- WEAR newly washed underclothes (underwear, bra) and clothes.

## 7 What should I do if my incision bleeds?

- PLACE a clean, dry dressing/gauze over the area that is bleeding.
- APPLY gentle pressure for a two (2) to three (3) minutes. Do not push too hard.
- The bleeding should stop after two (2) to three (3) minutes.

## 8 When to call the doctor?

- If the bleeding does not stop after you follow the instructions listed on number 7 above.
- If your incision breaks open.
- If the redness around your incision increases or spreads more than a half of inch from your incision.
- If you see pus coming from your incision.
- If you get a temperature of 100.5 degrees or higher.