

MARC MANDEL, M.D., F.A.C.S.

GENERAL AND ONCOLOGIC SURGERY OF THE BREAST AND ABDOMEN

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Post-Operative Care Instructions for Minor Surgery

You have just had minor surgery. Please follow my instructions to help minimize pain and length of recovery after your procedure. Call the office as soon as possible for a post-operative appointment.

WOUND CARE:

- Please note that you have a clear plastic dressing over your wound. This dressing is waterproof, but allows air to get to the wound to facilitate healing. You may also have skin glue as your dressing, in which case the instructions are still somewhat similar.
- You may notice some blood underneath the dressing. This is quite common and, unless it is a large amount, is not cause for concern. If there is a bubble of blood under the plastic dressing, I would advise making a tiny opening with the tip of scissors or a pin and gently squeeze the blood out into a gauze pad or tissue. I would then just continue to allow the dressing to stay intact. If the blood is leaking out from under the dressing, I would recommend getting some sterile gauze and tape and placing it over the dressing for the first twenty-four to forty-eight hours until the leakage of blood stops. I would still not recommend removing the dressing. If you feel you need to remove the dressing, please call the office.
- 50% of the time the sutures are not visible and are self-absorbing. You may see little white tapes over the incision, which help to hold the wound together. These may become stained with blood and, again, that is nothing to worry about. If you see sutures under the wound, these will be removed in the office at the appropriate time.
- Starting around the second or third day, you may begin to notice blood under the skin or a "black-and-blue mark." Again, this is not a cause for concern and it will all be re-absorbed over a period of a week or two.
- You may also notice swelling in the area of the wound and this generally begins to appear on the second or third day and peaks around the fifth day. If you had a lump removed, it may actually appear as if it has returned. This, often times, is just some fluid under the wound which could be resorbed on its own or which I may remove at your first visit with a needle. Again, it is nothing to worry about and is quite common. The lump should go away over a period of two or three weeks.

PAIN CONTROL:

- Most often Tylenol or Ibuprofen is enough for a minor surgical procedure. If you feel that your pain relief is not substantial on these simple medications, please call the office so we may call a stronger prescription in for you.
- For the first two days, ice is important in keeping the swelling down and reducing pain. You may use an ice pack that does not get the wound wet. Ice should be applied twenty minutes on and twenty minutes off. The ice should not be in contact with the skin directly for more than twenty minutes as it can cause frostbite. Ice is only effective for the first forty-eight hours. Following the first forty-eight hours, a heating pad can be used and, again, for only short periods of time -- ten or fifteen minutes, as not to burn the skin.

ACTIVITY:

- I will discuss the activity that is possible following your particular procedure. Be sure to ask me about this at the time of your surgery.
- You may shower starting on post-operative day one, unless otherwise instructed. You may not bathe unless otherwise instructed. I do not want the wound to be soaked. You may, however, stand with your back to the shower and let water gently run over the waterproof dressing.

DIET:

- Unless otherwise indicated, you should have no dietary changes.

BOWEL MOVEMENTS:

- These are generally not affected by minor surgery.

YOU SHOULD CALL ME IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING OCCUR:

1. Temperature greater than 101 for more than 24-hours.
2. Excessive bleeding, beyond that which was described in the first section.
3. If your pain is increasing steadily over a period of several days rather than slowly decreasing, I would recommend that you give me a call.
4. Increased swelling associated with redness over a period of three to five days.

IF YOU BELIEVE THAT YOU ARE HAVING A HEART ATTACK OR OTHER EMERGENT PROBLEM, PLEASE CALL 9-1-1 FIRST TO HAVE AN AMBULANCE BRING YOU TO THE HOSPITAL, THEN CONTACT THE OFFICE TO LET ME KNOW WHAT IS GOING ON.

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