

Information for skin surgery patients following curettage and cautery

Reference Number: ULHT-LFT-3651 v1

Issued: April 2022

Review Date: April 2024



This leaflet has been written as advice following your skin surgery and aims to answer questions you may have.

Dressings

- Keep your dressing in place and the wound dry for 2 days.
- After 2 days you may shower/bath as normal. Remove the wet dressing, clean the area by gently patting (not rubbing) with a clean wet flannel.
- After cleaning your wound, gently and thoroughly dry area by patting (not rubbing) with clean towel and re-apply a dressing or plaster if needed.
- If your wound is on your head, pat your hair dry and then let your hair dry naturally. Take care when brushing/combing your hair. Avoid additional hair care products.
- After 2 days, once the dressing has been removed, please apply a thin smear of clean plain Vaseline to the wound site twice daily until healed over.
- You can leave the wound uncovered but consider covering with a plaster if area is still slightly oozing, or if there is a chance of the wound becoming dirty or if stitches are catching on clothing.
- The most important point is to keep the wound nice and clean.

Frequently asked questions:

How long will it take my wound to heal?

The reaction and healing time will depend upon the size and type of lesion which has been removed. A black crust consisting of charred tissue will be seen on the surface (like a burn). This will wipe away after about 2 weeks and a scaly crust may then form. The wound will slowly heal like a graze.

Bleeding

- If you notice blood on the dressing within the first 48 hours, please be reassured that it is common for the wound to ooze a little blood or fluid, especially during the first 24 to 48 hours after surgery.
- If bleeding persists or wound starts to bleed again, apply firm and continual pressure to the area for 20 minutes. Usually this will stop the bleeding.

Frequently asked questions:

What should I do if I cannot stop the bleeding?

- If you cannot stop the bleeding, then contact your primary health care practitioner or seek advice from services such as 111 or attend your local urgent care centre.

What should I do if I take blood thinning medications?

- You are at slightly higher risk of bleeding, but do not stop taking your medication unless advised to do so.
- You may have an additional pressure dressing applied to the wound at the time of surgery to reduce the likelihood of bleeding. You will be advised when to remove this.

Numbness

- Numbness from the local anaesthetic will usually wear off in about 1 to 2 hours.
- You may eat, drink and take your medications normally after your procedure. However, local anaesthetic injected near the mouth can make your lips numb so you will need to avoid hot drinks/food or biting your lip until the feeling returns.

Infection

- We take every precaution to prevent a wound infection before, during and after your surgery. Despite these precautions, wounds can still become infected.
- Symptoms of a wound infection include ongoing or increased pain and/or swelling, redness, warmth, discharge/weeping. Rarely, you may experience fever or feel generally unwell.
- If you are concerned that your wound might be infected, please contact your primary healthcare practitioner as antibiotics may be needed.

Pain or discomfort

- You may notice some discomfort from the wound for a few days. This is usually relatively mild and will gradually decrease.

- Paracetamol is preferred as pain relief, if needed.
- More severe pain may indicate infection of your wound, especially if this occurs after two days.

Swelling

Swelling and bruising may occur, especially if you had surgery around the eyes. Overall residual swelling or bruising should improve over the week but can sometimes take a bit longer.

If swelling does not settle or increases, this may indicate infection.

Scarring

- Every effort will be made to minimise the scar.
- Scars can become pale or darker than the surrounding skin and can become large and thickened.
- Scars might become sore or itchy due to the nerves healing.
- Most scars usually flatten and fade over time.

Altered skin sensation or muscle paralysis

Nerves may be disturbed during skin surgery. This may cause changes in sensation and/or rarely paralysis in nearby muscles. This is normally temporary, however, can be permanent in some cases.

Please see your primary healthcare practitioner in the first instance, should you experience any problems after your skin surgery.

Further instructions:

Dermatology Outpatient Department:

Lincoln County Hospital	01522 573748
Pilgrim Hospital	01205 446238/445273
Grantham Hospital	01476 464023
Louth Hospital	01507 631322

References

If you require a full list of references for this leaflet please email

patient.information@ulh.nhs.uk

United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust endeavours to ensure that the information given here is accurate and impartial.

If you require this information in another language, large print, audio (CD or tape) or braille, please email the Patient Information team at patient.information@ulh.nhs.uk