

What to Expect in the Postoperative Period

The importance of postoperative care for your surgical site cannot be overemphasized. Your role in caring for your surgical wound is extremely important to the success of wound healing and the scar that results.

1. Bleeding or oozing at the surgical site is fairly common after surgery. To reduce the possibility of bleeding, please follow the post-op instructions carefully. Some blood spotting of the dressing is expected. *If bleeding saturates and leaks through your dressing, remove the bandage, move to a seated or lying position and apply firm continuous pressure with gauze pads for 20 minutes (timed). If there is still oozing, repeat pressure for another 20 minutes. Holding pressure will stop most postoperative bleeding. If not, please notify Dr. Redbord at the number provided below.
2. Swelling, bruising, and numbness are common after surgery. To help reduce these symptoms, follow the post-op instructions for keeping the area elevated and applying an ice pack. Numbness is usually temporary, but, in some cases, can persist for up to one year or more.
3. Pain after surgery is generally mild. If you experience pain or discomfort, take Extra Strength Tylenol® or acetaminophen every 4-6 hours as needed during waking hours. Do not exceed the maximum dose listed on the bottle. If pain remains uncontrolled, notify Dr. Redbord. DO NOT take pain relievers such as aspirin, ibuprofen, Advil, Motrin, Aleve, Midol, Excedrin, or Naprosyn as these products may increase bleeding.
4. Drainage or discharge: A bloody, yellowish or watery discharge is expected during the healing process. Infection seldom occurs when the wound care instructions have been carefully followed. Signs of infection include increased pain, swelling, redness, warmth, and excessive or foul-smelling drainage starting several days after surgery. Please contact our office if you experience signs of infection.
5. Scar: Any treatment for skin cancer will leave a scar. To improve the appearance of your scar, you can massage the healed area (using circular motions with your fingertip) for 15-20 minutes a day starting at least one month after your surgery date. As a rule of thumb, the line of stitches tends to be longer than the length of the original wound. This is done to avoid unnatural puckering and dimpling of the skin that would result if the incision were not lengthened. Redness and bumpiness of the scar are expected, especially in the first two months due to buried sutures (which will dissolve) and wound contraction. These generally improve as healing progresses, but redness can be expected for up to 6-8 months. In general, a postsurgical scar improves with time and can take up to one year or more to fully mature. Everyone heals differently and the final scar appearance depends greatly upon an individual's ability to heal. Direct sunlight can cause darkening or persistent redness along the scarline and should be avoided in the first few months after your surgery. If you have a history of abnormal scarring, such as hypertrophic scars or keloids, or if there are problems with the healing of your scar, injections or other treatments may be used to optimize the cosmetic result.

Dr. Redbord is available for you throughout the healing process to discuss any concerns that arise.

** If you have any questions or concerns, please call our office 703-938-5700.

I have been given a copy of postoperative instructions, and I understand my postoperative care. I have been advised to notify the office with any problems, questions or concerns regarding my recovery.

Name /Date