

## Longer term care of your scar

After your wound has healed, you are advised to moisturise your scar each day using Vaseline or another moisturiser. This can help the scar to soften and fade over the next few months.

- If you have dissolving stitches this can be done after one week for wounds on the head, face or neck, or after two weeks for wounds on the rest of the body
- If you have stitches which need to be removed, you can do this once they have been removed

You are advised to protect your scar from the sun with high factor 50 sunblock.

If you need this leaflet in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01923 217 187** or email [westherts.pals@nhs.uk](mailto:westherts.pals@nhs.uk)



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**West Hertfordshire  
Teaching Hospitals**  
NHS Trust



# A guide to...

# Advice after skin surgery

## *Patient information*

### Dermatology Department

Watford General Hospital 01923 217655

Hemel Hempstead Hospital 01442 287467

St Albans City Hospital 01727 897837

## Advice for patients following skin surgery

### Stitches

- You have ..... stitches that need to be removed in ..... days
- You have dissolving stitches which do not need to be removed

### Results

- You have a follow up appointment on .....
- We will write with your results (six to eight weeks).

If you have not received a letter after eight weeks, please telephone the dermatology department.

### General Advice

- Keep the wound dry for two days.
- After this, shower as normal, pat wound dry and reapply a plaster or dressing if preferred (obtained from chemist). Do NOT leave a wet dressing on your wound.
- **These things are normal:**
  - Minor pain or discomfort: take paracetamol (avoid aspirin and ibuprofen-containing painkillers)
  - Localised swelling and bruising around the wound site
  - Minor bleeding: apply FIRM pressure for 10 minutes with clean kitchen towel OVER your dressing
  - Minor redness around the wound with no pain or fever.
  - This represents normal healing
- **These things are not normal:**
  - Severe pain, not relieved by taking regular paracetamol
  - Significant bleeding that doesn't stop with pressure
  - Extensive bruising or swelling
  - The wound coming open
  - Increased redness, pain, discharge or a fever. These may indicate a wound infection
  - Increased redness, pain, discharge or a fever. These may indicate a wound infection

If any of these occur during normal working hours (9 am to 5 pm), please telephone the dermatology department on one of the following numbers:

- Hemel Hempstead Hospital Dermatology Secretaries:  
**01442 287467**
- St Albans City Hospital Dermatology Secretaries  
**01727 897837**
- Watford General Hospital Dermatology, answerphone:  
**01923 217655**

If a problem occurs during the evening or weekend, please attend the Urgent Care Centre at Hemel Hempstead Hospital or Watford General Hospital. You may be able to get an appointment at the Primary Care Centre at St Albans City Hospital. Alternatively, you can contact your GP's out-of-hours service.

### Specific wounds / situations

#### Lower legs

- You should walk as usual, but avoid prolonged standing (more than 30 minutes)
- When sitting, elevate your leg above hip height to help reduce swelling and aid healing
- You will be given a tubigrip stocking to wear from toes to knee (wear like a full-length sock). Please wear this during the day for two weeks. It may be removed at night and handwashed.

#### To prevent your wound breaking open (dehiscence)

Wounds in certain areas can be under high tension and strain, eg back, shoulders, legs and around joints

We advise you to avoid any strenuous exercise or heavy lifting that may add extra strain to the affected area, for at least two weeks following your surgery. This advice may extend to four weeks in certain cases

Swimming should be avoided for four weeks after your procedure to prevent infection