



## A guide to...

# Advice for patients following skin surgery

## *Patient Information*

### Watford General Hospital

Vicarage Road  
Watford  
WD18 0HB

Direct line:  
01923 217 655

### Hemel Hempstead

Hillfield Road  
Hemel Hempstead  
HP2 4AD

Direct Line:  
01442 287 467

### St Albans City Hospital

Waverley Road  
St Albans  
AL3 5PN

Direct Line:  
01727 897 837

### Advice for patients following skin surgery

You have ..... stitches that need to be removed in ..... days.

- You have a follow-up appointment on .....
- We will write with your results (6-8 weeks)

### General advice

1. Keep the wound dry for two days.
2. 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.
3. 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
4. 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.

If any of the above occur during working hours (9.00 am to 5.00 pm), please telephone the dermatology secretaries on one of the following numbers:

- Hemel Hempstead Hospital  
**01442 287 467**
- St Albans City Hospital  
**01727 897 837**
- Watford General Hospital  
**01923 217 655**

If a problem occurs during the evening or weekend, please attend the Urgent Care Centre at Hemel Hempstead Hospital, or Watford General Hospital. Alternatively you could contact your GP out-of-hours service.

### Specific wounds / situations

#### Lower legs

- You should walk as normal, but avoid prolonged standing (more than 30 mins)
- When sitting, please elevate your leg above hip height to help reduce swelling and aid healing
- You will be given a tubigrip stocking. Please wear this for two weeks during the day. It may be removed at night.

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

Wounds in certain areas can be under high tension and strain, e.g. back, shoulders, leg 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.

### Longer term care of your scar

After your stitches have been removed you can massage your scar daily using Vaseline. This can help the scar continue to heal and settle.

**For further information please contact the numbers on the front page of this leaflet.**

If you need this leaflet in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01923 217 187** or email **westherts.pals@nhs.net**



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