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Skin Biopsy & Wound Care Instructions

A biopsy site may take 2-4 weeks to completely heal. Everyone heals differently and at a different pace. Taking good care of the biopsy site and keeping it covered can prevent infection and speed healing as well as reduce discomfort and decrease the chance of scarring. Below are the instructions for changing two different types of bandages, please follow the bandaging instructions we have indicated for you.

Daily Bandage Change:

1. Gently remove the bandage. Often this is easiest if you take the bandage off in the shower after it is wet and loosens up a little.
2. Wash the area with mild soap and water, using only your fingertips to wash (a washcloth may be too abrasive). Remove any crust that may have formed. Pat dry.
3. With a Q-tip, apply Aquaphor ointment or Vaseline to the area and cover with a non-stick bandage, such as Telfa or a Band-Aid. Please **do not use** Bacitracin, Polysporin, or Neosporin (*see starred section on the back page for an explanation).

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Waterproof Weekly Bandage Change:

1. You may leave this bandage on for up to 1 week. When changing the bandage, gently remove the old one and clean the area with mild soap and water, using only your fingertips to wash (a washcloth may be too abrasive). Pat dry.
2. You may then apply another waterproof bandage and leave it on for up to 1 week. (You do not need to apply any ointment under the bandage). If you prefer, you may use a regular Band-Aid and change it daily, as described above.
3. Since the bandage is waterproof, you may shower with these bandages on. Check the bandage after bathing to make sure that no water has seeped underneath. If it has, or if you notice that blood has pooled under the bandage, you should remove it and apply a new waterproof bandage or follow the instructions for a daily bandage change given above.

You may discontinue using a bandage once the site is completely healed, typically after two weeks or so. A healed biopsy site is no longer open, no longer draining fluid, and does not form a scab. The new skin at the site after it has healed will look shiny and reddish-pink initially.

Post-Biopsy Instructions:

- *Please do not use Bacitracin, Polysporin or Neosporin even if you have not had any problems using these ointments in the past. Many people develop sensitivities to these medications, and this can cause irritation to your biopsy site. More importantly, there is a possibility of developing a severe allergic reaction to these ointments.
- Avoid activities that would put a strain on the biopsy site.
- Some soreness is expected. If you experience any discomfort, you may take Tylenol, one to two tablets every four hours. Do not use aspirin or ibuprofen (e.g. Advil, Aleve, Bufferin, Excedrin, Motrin, Naproxen or Nuprin) for the first three days after a biopsy unless otherwise indicated.
- If the area becomes very sore, red, and/or hot to the touch, please call us. It is possible the area is infected.
- Some bruising near or below the site is normal and it could last up to a week. Swelling is also normal. It usually increases for 24-48 hours and then begins to improve. Please call if swelling reappears or worsens.
- If bleeding occurs, you will need to apply continuous pressure for 15-20 minutes. Use a gauze pad that has been covered with a little Vaseline to prevent the gauze from sticking to the biopsy site. Do not keep peeking to see if the bleeding has stopped while holding pressure. If after 15-20 minutes the bleeding has not stopped, hold continuous pressure for another 20 minutes. *If bleeding continues, please call us.*

We usually receive the biopsy report within a week, and we always call with the results. As we are not permitted to leave test results in a voicemail, be they normal or otherwise, we will leave you a message asking you to call the office so we can discuss the results with you. **If you have not heard from us within one week, please give us a call and we will check with the lab.**