

## **Mohs Micrographic Surgery Wound Care Instructions**

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### **General Guidelines**

- Healing takes time — scars continue to remodel for **6–12+ months**.
  - Follow all instructions carefully for the best cosmetic and functional outcome.
  - **Avoid all strenuous activity** (exercise, lifting, bending, stretching) for **48 hours**.
  - **No alcohol** for 48 hours — it can increase bleeding.
  - Keep the initial bandage **clean and dry** for at least **48 hours**.
  - After 48 hours, begin **daily cleaning and re-bandaging** (see below).
  - If prescribed antibiotics, take the full course as directed.
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### **Pain Management (Optional)**

\*\**(Do not use if on blood thinner like Eliquis, etc)*

- Use **acetaminophen (Tylenol)** and **ibuprofen (Advil)** unless contraindicated
  - **Within 1 hour of getting home**, take:
    - Acetaminophen 500 mg (1–2 tablets) **AND** Ibuprofen 600 mg
  - Then alternate every 3–4 hours:
    - Ibuprofen 200–600 mg
    - Acetaminophen 500–1,000 mg
  - Do **not exceed** 4,000 mg of acetaminophen in 24 hours.
  - Stay well-hydrated while taking ibuprofen.
  - Usually only needed for the first 48 hours.
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### **Bleeding**

- **Mild-oozing or blood-tinged drainage is normal.**
- If the dressing becomes soaked with bright red blood (if only leaking under the bandage, go directly to step 2):
  1. Remove the bandage.
  2. Apply **firm, direct pressure** with clean gauze or a towel for **20 minutes (no peeking)**. If it stops bleeding, re-affix the bandage as best you can.
  3. If still bleeding, repeat pressure for another 20 minutes.
  4. If bleeding continues after 2–3 attempts, **call our office or Dr. Boothman**.
- Once bleeding stops, clean and re-bandage the area.

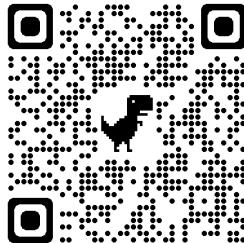
## Cleaning & Re-Bandaging

1. Start after **48 hours** (unless you have a special case, see below).
2. Wash your hands before touching the wound.
3. Gently remove the pressure bandage. Use warm water if needed to help it come off.
4. Wash the area gently with **soap and warm water**.
  - Use gauze or a cotton-tipped applicator — **not cotton balls** — to gently remove any crust or dried blood.
5. Let the area air dry for ~5 minutes.
6. Apply a thin layer of **Vaseline®**, **Aquaphor®**, **Cetaphil Healing Ointment®** (available for purchase).
7. Cover with a **non-stick bandage** (e.g., Telfa) and **paper tape**.
8. Change the dressing **once daily**.
9. Continue until the wound is no longer crusting (usually at least 7 days).

✓ Keeping the wound **clean, moist, and covered** prevents scabbing and reduces scarring.

✗ **Do not pick** at any scabs — allow them to fall off naturally.

📺 Scan the QR code to watch a wound care video.



## Swelling & Bruising

- Bruising and swelling are common — especially on the **face**.
- Swelling may cause a black eye or even the eye to swell shut — this is **normal**.
- Bruising may travel downward due to gravity and can last **1-2 weeks**.

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## Ice & Elevation

- Start **ice packs 24 hours after surgery**:
    - Use a cold pack or frozen veggies wrapped in a towel.
    - Apply for **20 minutes every 1 hours**, directly over the bandage.
    - **Never place ice directly on skin**.
  - Keep the surgical area **elevated above your heart** as much as possible.
    - If on the face/head, sleep with your head elevated ~30° for the first few nights.
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## **Closure-Specific Instructions**

### **If You Have a Sutured Closure (Linear or a Flap)**

- Most sutures are **absorbable** and dissolve in **7–14 days** (top sutures), with the deep sutures (you can't see them) lasting up to 90 days.
- If **removable sutures or staples** were used, a removal appointment was made at surgery (usually 7–14 days from the day of surgery).
- Keep the surgical bandage dry and in place for 48 hours, then follow general care above.

### **If You Have a Skin Graft**

- You may shower after 24 hours — but **do not get the dressing wet**.
- If the dressing falls off:
  - Do not clean aggressively. Reapply Vaseline and a bandage and call us.
- If a **bolster** is present:
  - Keep dry for 1 week.
  - We'll remove it at your 1-week follow-up.
  - Then resume daily cleaning, Vaseline, and bandaging for an additional week after the bolster is removed.
- Graft color/texture may take **weeks to months** to arrive at the best result.
- For long-term cosmetic concerns, follow up in **6+ months**. Treatments may be available.
- Apply **sunscreen daily** for 12 months.
- **Donor site:** follow the same general/suture wound instructions for a sutured wound.

### **If You Have a Cartilage Graft**

- Do not let the graft dry out! Keep it greasy and covered for at least 4 weeks.
- **Donor site:** follow the same general/suture wound instructions for a sutured wound.

### **If Your Wound Will Heal Naturally (Granulation Healing)**

- Healing may take longer, but can still have excellent results.
- Vinegar soaks (see below)
- Keep it **clean, moist, and covered** daily until it is healed.
- Scab prevention is key to faster healing and better scarring.
- Lower legs can take months to heal. Wearing compression stockings is critical to improving your healing time.

### **Vinegar Soaks**

- Mix 1 TBSP of white distilled vinegar and 2 cups of water in a closable jar or container. You can keep this in the fridge and reuse.
- Soak gauze in above mixture and apply to surgical site for 20 minutes one to two times daily
- Pat dry.
- Apply **Vaseline® or Aquaphor®** as directed.
- Cover the area with a bandage.


- Continue until healed as long as you see progress.
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## When to Call the Office

Call us if you notice:

- Bright red bleeding that doesn't stop after applying pressure as instructed above.
- A sudden, swollen, purple, tender area (possible hematoma).
- Increased or foul-smelling drainage (green/yellow).
- Increasing pain and tenderness, especially if developing after the first few days.
- Fever over **101°F**, especially if lasting more than 1 day.
- Any concerns or unusual changes in your wound

 (208) 884-3376 | After hours:  Dr. Boothman (509) 903-5327

 Go to the ER if you cannot reach us and urgent care is needed.

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## Specific Instructions (Only If Checked)

### Type of Closure

- Dissolvable sutures:** you do **not** need a suture removal appointment.
- Non-dissolvable sutures** or **staples:** removal appointment: \_\_\_\_\_.
- Skin graft:** please follow the skin graft instructions.
- Bolster:** you have a wound dressing sewn on. Removal appointment: \_\_\_\_\_.
- Cartilage graft:** please follow the cartilage graft instructions.
- Granulation:** please follow the instructions for a wound that will heal on its own.

### Prescriptions

- A **prescription** was sent to your pharmacy. Take as directed.

### Lower Extremity Wounds

- Use **Vinegar soaks** (see above)
- Wear **compression socks** daily until healed.
- Wound clinic** referral was sent. Expect to hear from them in the next few days.

### Follow-up

- Wound check appointment:** \_\_\_\_\_.
- Follow-up with your primary dermatologist for regular skin exams every \_\_\_\_\_ months.
- A **referral** was sent for you to see \_\_\_\_\_. Please contact us if you have not heard from that office within one week.