

## Tissue Viability

# Looking after your surgical wound

There are many different types of operation and your doctors and nurses will give you individual wound care advice.

Wounds heal more quickly if the right conditions are in place. This leaflet explains how, together, we can help your wound heal more quickly.

### Before your operation

**MRSA:** Before your operation you will be tested for MRSA. This is a painless test. If these tests are positive, you will be treated before your operation.

**Know the risks:** Discuss with your surgeon the risks of infection for your particular surgery.

**Shower or bath:** You are advised to shower or bath using soap, either the day before or on the day of surgery. If you are in hospital you will be given help to do this, if you need it.

**Keeping warm:** If your temperature is low just before or during your operation you may be at higher risk of an infection developing in your wound. Therefore you should try and keep warm whilst sitting waiting for your surgery in hospital by bringing in a dressing gown, slippers, pyjama bottoms etc from home to wear whilst waiting.



## Patient Information

**Shaving:** For most operations, you will not need to have the hair around the site of the operation removed. However, if your healthcare team do need to remove hair (to allow them to see or reach the skin) it should be done by the healthcare professionals caring for you on the day of the operation using electric hair clippers with a disposable head.

**Diet:** A healthy diet is important before and after your surgery. Maintain a balanced diet with protein, carbohydrates, fruit, vegetables, vitamins and minerals. Ask your nurses or doctors if you have any concerns about your diet.

**Smoking:** It is always a good idea to stop smoking and especially as you are about to have an operation. Stopping smoking will improve your chances of wound healing. University Hospital has a dedicated NHS Stop Smoking Service that can provide medication and advice on how to give you the best chance of quitting smoking for good. For more information ask a member of staff or contact the 'No Butts' Stop Smoking Service on 024 7696 4760 or e-mail: [stopsmoking.services@uhcw.nhs.uk](mailto:stopsmoking.services@uhcw.nhs.uk)

## During your operation

**We will make sure your operation takes place in a clean environment.**

**Theatre Wear:** You will be given a theatre gown suitable for your operation, and helped to put it on in time for your surgery. Remember you should keep warm whilst waiting for your surgery by also wearing a dressing gown, pyjama bottoms, slippers etc that you brought into hospital with you.

**Hand washing:** Staff will thoroughly wash their hands and clean their nails, remove any rings or bracelets, nail varnish and false nails. Staff will wear surgical gowns and gloves that have been sterilised to remove any bacteria.

**Monitoring:** We will make sure your temperature is monitored regularly and if you are diabetic control your blood sugar level. Both are important in preventing an infection in your wound.

## Patient Information

**Antibiotics:** If your doctor thinks you need antibiotics you will be given them just before surgery to help prevent infection. For longer operations you may need more doses. Your healthcare team should discuss this with you before your operation.

### **After your operation**

**Whilst you are in hospital:** Your wound will be covered with a clean dressing that helps it to heal and protects it from infection.

**Don't be afraid to ask if staff have washed their hands.** At this stage don't touch your wound as this can make a wound infection more likely. If there are dressings on your wound do not remove them, the ward staff will check them daily and remove them if necessary. Dressings can usually be changed after 48 hours and you can shower or bath at this time.

Let nursing or medical staff know if you notice your wound oozing and if the dressing becomes wet at any time. Also tell staff if you experience an increased amount of pain from the wound, an unusual smell, an increased amount of ooze, or an increase in redness or warmth around the wound.

**When you are allowed home** you will be informed when your dressing needs changing or when your stitches or clips can be removed by your GP's practice nurse or district nurse.

Some additional dressings will be given to you for your comfort in the days following your operation.

### **Follow up**

You should contact your GP practice nurse and make an appointment for the removal of your stitches /clips /dressings on .....

Or, if you are housebound we will arrange for your district nurse to visit you on ..... for your health care needs.

## Patient Information

**If you have any questions or concerns regarding your wound or any other aspect of your care whilst in hospital do not hesitate to speak to the nursing or medical staff looking after you.**

When you go home you can talk to your practice nurse, district nurse or GP about any concerns or questions you have about your surgical wound.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact 024 7696 6154 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

### **Document History**

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