

## **ENT Services/Head and neck**

# **Patient information on wound care**

An opening or cut to the skin may be closed using sutures (stitches) or clips. Occasionally, for medical reasons the wound may not be surgically closed, but left to heal naturally.

### **Day of discharge**

Your consultant or a deputy will see you on the ward and agree your discharge from the ward.

### **Nutrition**

Try to maintain a healthy balanced diet and drink plenty of fluids. Good nutrition will help your wound to heal.

### **Mobility**

Avoid activities that may cause your wound to pull apart or stretch.

### **Driving**

Resuming driving will depend on the size and position of your wound, ask your doctor for advice.

### **Sexual relations**

You may resume sexual relations when you are comfortable to do so.

### **Returning to work**

Your wound size, position, and any procedures you may have had will determine when it will be safe for you to return to work. Ask your doctor for advice before your discharge. If necessary a sick note can be issued.



### Sun exposure

A healing scar can become more noticeable if it gets sunburnt. Limit sun exposure for six months following surgery, cover up or once healed use sunscreen.

### Medication

You may be issued with pain relief along with other take home medicines as prescribed by your doctor, if not, you may take your usual paracetamol based products as instructed on the packaging. Aspirin based painkillers **are not** advisable as they can increase the risk of bleeding/bruising. If you take aspirin as a routine medication discuss this with your doctor.

**Always follow the instructions on medicines carefully**

### Bathing/Showering

After washing – pat the wound gently until completely dry. **Do not soak in a bath** as this could cause infection. Do not use talcum powder, perfumed soaps/shower gels, or perfume directly on your wound. Do not apply creams or lotions unless instructed to do so, always seek medical advice first.

### Dressings

You will be advised about any dressings you may have, they vary according to the type of surgery you may have had, ask your doctor or nursing staff. If your wound is situated where it can be disturbed by clothing or exposed to dirty conditions it is advisable to cover it until fully healed, changing the dressing regularly as it becomes wet or soiled.

### Bleeding

If your wound bleeds heavily, apply pressure directly to the area, which is bleeding, (if necessary, using clean material). If the bleeding does not stop after 15 minutes contact the Head and Neck Ward on 024 7696 7831 or attend your nearest Accident and Emergency unit.

### Infection

If your wound becomes red, swollen, hot to the touch, begins to discharge, the discharge smells offensive, or bleeds, you may have developed a wound

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infection. You may also develop a temperature or feel generally unwell. You need to seek medical advice as soon as possible by contacting your GP.

### Removal of sutures/clips

If your wound has sutures or clips these will need to be removed (unless they are self-dissolving). When and where they need to be removed is detailed below.

### Scarring

If you are concerned about scarring or disfigurement a list of useful addresses is available on request from the nursing staff.

### Outpatient appointment

If your consultant requests a follow up appointment at the outpatient department it will be sent through the post to your home address, alternatively you may be asked to see your GP. You will be informed which applies to you, before you leave the unit.

### Contact details

If you experience any problems regarding your wound please contact your GP. If you are unable to make this contact you may telephone the Ear, Nose and Throat ward 32 on 024 7696 7831 You may be asked to attend the unit to be seen by a doctor.

**You have sutures/clips to be removed on ----- (date) by your GP/ Ward staff/ OP clinic**

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, we will do our best to meet your needs. Please contact the Department on 024 7696 7831.

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