

Care of your stitches after plastic surgery

This leaflet gives information and advice on caring for your stitches after plastic surgery at Reading, Thatcham or Oxford.

What to expect

After any surgery, especially when performed under general anaesthetic, it is normal to feel tired.

If you have a dressing present on discharge please remove this on: _____(date).

It may be possible to arrange for the nurse at your GP practice to remove your dressing.

Once the dressings have been removed, you may bathe and shower as usual. Pat the stitch line(s) dry with a towel or use a hairdryer on a cool setting.

If you have stitches in your head or face, sleep upright for a few nights. By upright we mean sitting upright in bed or an armchair and supported by pillows. If the stitches are on your leg, elevate this when resting on a stool or sofa for at least two weeks.

Facial stitches

Wash your face as normal with unperfumed soap, being careful over the stitched area.

Take care to rinse the soap away, and then pat dry with a clean towel or paper.

If the tapes peel prior to your out patient visit trim them back with scissors.

Some people are given an antibiotic ointment called Chloramphenicol. This should be applied to the stitch line as directed.

Scalp stitches

You can wash your hair as normal. Dry your hair using a hair dryer on a cool setting. Be careful when brushing or combing not to catch the stitches.

Stitch removal

You will need to return to either the Outpatients Department or your practice nurse if your stitches are not dissolvable, as they will need to be removed.

If the stitches are dissolvable it will take up to three months for the stitches to fully dissolve.

What NOT to do at home:

It is important to remember that you will not be able to drive or operate machinery for 48 hours after a general anaesthetic.

Medication after surgery

Some people are given an antibiotic ointment called Chloramphenicol. This should be applied to the stitch line as directed.

Problems to look out for

- Initial fresh bleeding.
- If the area is infected (redness, pain, oozing or discharge from the wound site).

If you experience any of the above, contact us, your GP or practice nurse as soon as possible.

Follow up

If required, you will receive a follow up appointment to discuss any test results with a member of the Plastic Surgery Team. Test results can take up to one month to return. Your GP usually has access to these test results and maybe able to discuss them with you if you have concerns.

Please feel free to discuss any questions or worries you may have with your doctor. If you encounter any problems please contact us on the phone numbers below.

Department of Plastic Surgery

Royal Berkshire Hospital
0118 322 7083

West Berkshire Community
Hospital
01635 273390

John Radcliffe Hospital
01865 231173

Alternatively, call the ward or unit you were discharged from:

Adult Day Surgery Unit (ADSU): 0118 322 7622

Dorrell Ward: 0118 322 7172 / 8101

Visit the Trust website at www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Based upon information from Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Revised by RBFT, November 2016

Review due: November 2018