



Advice following minor plastic surgery

This leaflet gives information and advice following your minor plastic or reconstructive surgery. If there is anything you don't understand please ask your doctor or nurse.

Pain relief

Usually the operated area will be numb for 4-6 hours, but occasionally longer.

As the anaesthetic wears off, you may feel discomfort or pain around the area. If you need pain relief we recommend Paracetamol (unless you are allergic to it). Please avoid aspirin unless you are taking it for another condition and the doctor has told you to continue it.

Wound care and dressings

Your wound will have a dressing over it. The type of dressing varies depending on the area of the body. Some dressings must be kept absolutely dry until your follow up appointment; others are splash-proof. We will give you advice on how to look after your dressing but if in doubt please keep it clean and dry.

Chloramphenicol eye ointment

Occasionally, we give patients this ointment to use rather than a dressing. Despite the name, we use this for wounds, not eyes.

Here is how to use it:

1. Apply a thin layer to the wound twice a day. Do not reapply without washing the old layer off.
2. Store in the fridge and throw it away 28 days after opening or at the expiry date.

Activity following surgery

This varies greatly depending on your operation. We will advise you how long you should rest, be off work or avoid exercise. Here is some general advice about different areas of surgery:

Lips or mouth

Please avoid hot drinks or food until the next day because of the numbing effect of the local anaesthetic and the risk of burning yourself.

Face or head

Please don't lean forward on the day of surgery as this may cause bleeding. Use an extra pillow on the first night after surgery to help reduce swelling.

Hand, finger or arm

Please elevate the limb for at least 48 hours. Do not let it hang down. We may give you a sling, or suggest you prop the limb on two pillows, or both.

Foot or leg

Please rest with your leg up as much as possible for 48 hours. We may also advise you not to drive during your recovery period.

Body

Please avoid any heavy lifting (more than a kettle of water) or sport for four weeks.

Things to watch out for post-op

It is normal to see slight ooze from the wound. If you see a lot of bleeding, press a clean towel firmly over the dressing for 10 minutes without stopping – watch the clock as you do this.

Contact your GP, practice nurse or go to the nearest minor injuries unit or emergency department (A&E) if the bleeding does not stop.

If your wound becomes red, swollen or more painful, it could be a sign that there is a problem. Please contact us, your GP or practice nurse for advice.

Follow-up appointments

We may ask you to have one or more follow-up appointments with the Plastic Surgery Team or at your GP practice. We may want to check your wound and/or remove your stitches, or to discuss the results of a biopsy. The details for you are shown below:

Your consultant: _____

Removal of stitches: ☐ Wound check: ☐

Where: _____ **Number of days:** _____

GP practice nurse ☐ _____

Important: Please make any appointments with your GP practice nurse **yourself**. We only make hospital appointments for you.

Dressing clinic ☐ _____

Consultant follow-up ☐ _____

Royal Berkshire Hospital Plastic Surgery Outpatients ☐

Bracknell Healthspace Plastic Surgery Outpatients ☐

Townlands Memorial Hospital Plastic Surgery Outpatients ☐

West Berkshire Community Hospital Plastic Surgery Outpatients ☐

Phone follow-up: ☐ 3 weeks following surgery _____

Contact numbers

Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery Clinical Admin Team (CAT 1): rbbh.CAT1@nhs.net

Monday-Friday 8.30am-4.30pm

Royal Berkshire Hospital: **0118 322 7139**

West Berkshire Community Hospital: **01635 273390**

Alternatively, call:

If out of hours / weekend, call the Specialist Surgery Inpatient Unit in Oxford on 01865 234723 / 01865 231233 for advice. If you have trouble getting through, ring the Oxford University Hospital switchboard on 01865 741166 and ask for duty Plastic SHO.

General Outpatients Department 0118 322 8245.

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

RBFT Department of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, September 2025

Next review due: September 2027.