

# Caring for your Aquacel surgical<sup>®</sup> dressing following knee surgery

## Introduction

You have a special Aquacel surgical<sup>®</sup> dressing following your orthopaedic surgery. This leaflet outlines how the dressing works, how to care for it and when to have it changed.

## What is an Aquacel surgical<sup>®</sup> dressing?

It is a gel dressing that covers the wound and has a bacteria-proof, flexible and waterproof covering that sticks directly to your skin. The gel layer absorbs any blood/fluid leaking from the wound and the waterproof covering keeps the gel dressing in place and protects the wound.

## Why have I been given this dressing?

Aquacel<sup>®</sup> surgical dressing is flexible, aiding mobility and enabling you to exercise more freely. Because it is waterproof and bacteria-proof, it protects your wound from infection while healing, and it allows you to shower or bathe. It also absorbs any post-operative bleeding or oozing from the incision while it heals.

## How will I know when my dressing needs changing?

The release of blood or fluid from your wound after surgery is completely normal. As the gel absorbs this, the dressing will swell slightly and you will notice staining under the waterproof cover (Pic 2).

When the gel dressing becomes fully saturated and you notice staining to the edge of the gel area, it is time to have your dressing changed.



Pic 1: Dressing immediately after operation with no ooze.



Pic 2: Dressing few days after operation. Some ooze but does not need changing.



Pic 3: Ooze from the wound has reached the edge of the dressing. This needs to be changed.

### Changing the dressing

Your dressing will normally be removed at the same time as having any clips or stitches removed, approximately 12 to 14 days after your operation.

### Symptoms to look out for

If you experience any of the following symptoms in the first 4 weeks after surgery or your dressing needs changing before your appointment to have any clips/stitches removed, then please call the Outpatients Department on 0118 322 6938 to make an appointment to have the wound checked by a surgeon. Please note this may not be the surgeon who did your operation, it may be one of their colleagues. Please leave your details on the answer phone and someone will call you back as soon as they are able with an appointment date and time.

- Excessive fluid or blood leaking from under your dressing.
- Red, hot skin spreading around the dressing.
- Excessive pain or a bad odour coming from the wound.
- The dressing moves and the wound is exposed.

For more information about the Trust visit [www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk)

This document can be made available in other languages and formats upon request.

Dept of Orthopaedics, May 2019

Review due: May 2021