



## Wound Care Following Surgery On Your Arm or Hand

### What should I expect?

- The suture line will develop a thin line of redness and may be tender for several days following surgery.
- Sometimes sutured areas may begin to bleed 1-2 hours after the surgery. If this happens, simply hold continuous firm pressure with a paper towel or gauze to the wound for 20 minutes without peeking. If the bleeding continues, repeat holding pressure for a second 20 minute period.

### What should I do?

- Keep the pressure bandage over the treated area on overnight.
- In the morning, it is safe to remove the bandage and shower. Just allow the soapy water to gently run over the wound. Do not rub or aggressively clean the biopsy site.
- Keep your arm and hand elevated for the first week as much as possible.
- Avoid bending, lifting, or any exercise that will increase your blood pressure or heart rate. These actions will increase the risk of dehiscence (wound spreading apart), delayed healing, infection, and poor scarring.
- Apply Vaseline or Aquaphor healing ointment to the biopsy site 3-4x/ day for three days. The ointment will help the wound heal more quickly and minimize scarring. We prefer Vaseline or Aquaphor to antibiotic ointment due to the increase in allergic reactions to antibiotic ointments such as Neosporin.
- You may choose to cover the wound with a bandage to keep the ointment from staining your clothing.
- For the first two days following surgery, you should take an over the counter pain reliever such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) every 6 hours even if you are not in pain. Its important to take the medication to "stay ahead" of the pain; once the area begins to

hurt, its much harder to control the pain. Your physician may also prescribe a narcotic pain reliever depending on the extent of your surgery.

-You may be instructed to follow up in 2 weeks to have your sutures removed.

## When should I call you?

-If there is persistent bleeding after holding pressure for two twenty minute sessions, then please call.

-If the wound develops a foul smell, becomes more painful after three days following surgery, starts to drain thick gray-yellow pus, or you develop fever or chills, please call.

-If you have any other questions or concerns, please call. We know this can be a scary and uncomfortable experience, we want to be there to support you.

## Who do I contact with questions?

-During regular office hours, please call us at 215 390-1449.

-For urgent matters during evenings, weekends, or other times that the office is not open, please call Dr. Perlis on his mobile phone.

-For non-urgent matters, you may also reach us by e-mail at [nursing@keyderm.com](mailto:nursing@keyderm.com)