

WOUND CARE

(POST-OP INSTRUCTIONS)

Background

Mr Banwell likes to keep his post-operative wound care as simple and straight forward as possible. He will personally discuss with you the post-operative management of your procedure prior to surgery and again on the day of surgery. You will also receive instructions from the nursing staff in outpatients or on the ward.

Almost always, the nurses in the hospital will arrange a dressing check for you at one week in the outpatients department and then Mr Banwell's team will organise a subsequent outpatient follow up with him.

What should I do after the operation?

Please take things easy. Even a minor operation can lead to problems so rest is required for a week or so. If you have had a bigger procedure then you will be aware that recovery will be longer. Your wound will usually be dressed with brown surgical tape (micropore). This should be left intact and you should not touch it. If there are any concerns prior to your one week dressing check then please phone the hospital outpatients directly.

When do my sutures get removed?

Mr Banwell usually leaves sutures in the face for 1-week. Elsewhere on the body (back, chest, breasts and limbs) they stay in for longer, but often dissolvable stitches are used which do not need to be removed. If your wound has been closed with dissolvable stitches only, you can leave the tape on the wound and the nurse in outpatients will give you advice.

How do I know if there is an infection?

There are several so-called 'cardinal signs' of infection including the wound becoming painful, red, swollen and hot. In such cases a course of antibiotics is usually required. However, if you feel generally unwell, have a temperature or have nausea and vomiting please visit your GP or contact the hospital where you had your procedure.

What if my wound starts to bleed?

If post-operative bleeding occurs it will usually occur in the first 24 hours. Strikethrough (oozing through the dressing causing staining on the micropore tape) is not unusual and is usually no cause for concern. However, if bleeding does continue to occur, direct pressure for at least 20 minutes is indicated. This first aid measure usually does the trick but if there are further problems please return to the hospital where you had your operation.

Can I shower or bath?

The wounds will be dressed with brown surgical tape (micropore). This is to stay in place for at least two weeks. You will be able to shower the day after you leave hospital and then it is important to pat the tape dry with a towel then use a hairdryer on a warm setting to dry the tape off. Please do not remove the tape unless instructed to do so. When the tape is removed at 2 weeks, Mr Banwell usually likes to retape the wound for a further week – this provides support to the wound.

Who do I contact in an emergency?

The best place to call in an emergency is the hospital at which your operation was performed. Alternatively, you should telephone Mr Banwell's team (between 9am and 5pm) on 0845 2600 261.

What can I do after surgery?

It is important to take things easy after your operation. Refrain from bending or lifting (this raises your blood pressure and can lead to further bleeding). If you have had an operation on your face it is a good idea to sleep on some pillows so you do not lay flat. Strenuous exercise should be avoided for at least two weeks (even for minor procedures) and longer if you have had a bigger operation. Mr Banwell or his team will explain in more detail should you have any specific questions.

Important Notice

Mr Banwell strongly advises you stop smoking prior to surgery as this can affect the outcome of surgery and increase complication rates. Nutritional supplements, anticoagulant medication and blood thinners (eg. aspirin and brufen) all increase the risk of bleeding and should be stopped prior to surgery unless otherwise instructed.