

STAR Clinic Patient Advice: How to care for your wound after your procedure

You have had a minor surgical procedure under local anaesthetic to remove your skin lesion. You have had one of the following:

- a) ***Ellipse Excisional Biopsy***: your skin lesion has been fully cut out and stitched. This will leave a permanent pale line scar once fully healed. There are two types of stitches:
 - You have had **dissolving stitches** which do not need to be removed and will safely dissolve by themselves. There are two types of dissolving stitch: if visible on the skin surface as pale cotton threads (usually on the scalp) these will soften and fall out, and this may take up to 6 weeks. If not visible on the skin surface then these will dissolve under the skin after around 3 months. You should not notice these stitches whilst they dissolve, but it is normal to feel some lumpiness along the scar, or at either end of the scar, and this will resolve over time.
 - You have had **non-dissolving stitches** which need to be removed. You have an appointment to return for removal of your stitches on at You may have had some dissolving stitches placed below the top stitches, and these may cause your scar to feel lumpy for around 3 months after the top layer of stitches have been removed.
- b) ***Shave Excision & Cautery or Curettage & Cautery (Scraping)***: following removal of your skin lesion, the base of the wound has been cauterised with heat to seal it, leaving a brown/black scab. This will fall off usually in 7-14 days to reveal a pink, and finally a pale/white scar once fully healed.

What to expect, and what to look out for after your procedure:

- The area injected will feel **numb** for up to 4 hours, after which you may feel some minimal discomfort. Take Paracetamol if needed, but avoid ibuprofen or aspirin as this may cause bleeding.
- Keep your wound clean, **dry**, and covered for a minimum of **72 hours**, after which you may shower as normal. You may then keep dressings off, or reapply, changing at regular intervals, and also if the dressing becomes wet or soiled. **If you have a cauterised scab, keep this dry for 7 days.**
- There is a small risk your wound may **bleed** any time within the first 2-3 days. If excessive, press firmly for 15-20 minutes and elevate the area. Once any bleeding stops you may then change the dressing. If bleeding persists please get help (see below).
- If you have had stitches you are advised not to carry out any exercise, strenuous activity, heavy lifting, bending, or swimming for 4 weeks, and if your wound is on the leg take care with driving, to prevent **infection** or the **wound coming apart** (particularly wounds on the leg, back or near joints).
- **Signs of infection** are a red/hot/swollen/painful/discharging wound. If any of these occur please get help (see below) as you may need antibiotics.
- If you have a wound on the head, face, or near the eye, you may get swelling or bruising for several days. You should avoid bending, and sleep propped up to help reduce this.

Long term care of your scar

For best scar healing you are advised to moisturise your scar 7 days after your procedure, ideally with vaseline or Bio-oil, or any other moisturiser. Do this at least twice a day, gently for the first 4 weeks, after which you can firmly massage the scar with your moisturiser using circular motions along the length of your scar, and continue for several months. Avoid exposing your scar to direct sunlight for 12 months as this can cause permanent discoloration and prevent the scar from fading. Use sunblock SPF 50+ and shade. Scars take 12-18 months to settle into their final appearance.

Where to get help: either contact Dr Anthony by email at starclinic@drsamanthonyskin.com (primary contact) or by phoning the clinic on **0203 327 7777**, or your GP, or if out of hours you may need to seek help from NHS Direct by phoning **111**, or attending an urgent care centre.

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