

Advice following minor skin surgery

Dr. Richard Groves FRCP, Consultant Dermatologist

Date of suture removal:

Next appointment:

After your procedure

In general you can go back to work or to school immediately following the procedure. The anaesthetic will last about 45 minutes and, though the wound may be slightly tender, there is usually little pain afterwards. Paracetamol (2 tablets up to four times daily) may be taken if necessary, but aspirin and non-steroidal anti-inflammatories should be avoided as they may increase the risk of bleeding.

Looking after the wound

If a dressing has been applied, please keep the wound covered until your stitches are removed. You may bath or shower, but keep a dressing over the wound. The dressing will need to be replaced every day or so: gently peel it away, taking care to avoid pulling on the wound. Clean the wound with clear water and pat dry with a tissue. Apply antibiotic cream or ointment (e.g. Savlon or Fucidin) directly to the wound and then apply a new clean dressing.

If there is no dressing (for example following some procedures to the scalp), simply keep the wound clean and apply an antibiotic cream or ointment to the surgical site daily for at least five days.

It is normal for wounds to be slightly red or tender while they heal. However, please contact me or your GP immediately if your wound becomes much more tender, increasingly red or discharges a lot.

It is also normal to experience a little oozing or bleeding in the first 24 hours. If your wound bleeds press it gently but firmly without stopping for 10 - 15 minutes with a clean tissue or dressing. This will stop most bleeds but if it does not, please contact my office or your GP for advice immediately.

Having your stitches removed

You will be told at the end of the procedure when your stitches should be removed and, in general, it is most convenient for this to be done by your family doctor or practice nurse. A note of this date has been made at the top of this information sheet. However, if this arrangement proves difficult, please discuss this such that alternate provision can be made.

Be careful with your wound for the first 3 weeks after your stitches have been removed. Avoid activities that involve lifting or stretching if these cause tension on the wound. In some cases I will suggest that the wound is supported by tape strips for a period after the sutures are removed.

Will there be a scar?

Any surgical procedure to the skin will leave a permanent scar. Usually this is minor, but occasionally it may be more noticeable. The face tends to heal very well, but scars on the back and the legs can be more pronounced. It can take up to 2 years before a scar reaches its final appearance.

What about the results?

Once your biopsy has been analysed at the laboratory, I will write to you and to your family doctor with the results. This usually happens within two to three weeks, though some special tests may take longer than this. Please contact my office if you have not heard from me within three weeks.

In general I like to review the surgical site and the pathology findings with you 4-6 weeks after the procedure. A note of the suggested time for this has been made at the top of this information sheet.

What to do if you have other questions

If you have any questions about your skin biopsy please ask me or one of the nurses in the procedure room.

Contact details:

Dr. Groves' office
116 Harley Street
London W1G 7JL
Tel: 020 7616 7797

London Clinic day surgery unit
149 Harley Street
London W1G 6DE
Tel:020 7616 7648

Winchester House Medical Centre
Independents Road, Blackheath
London SE3 9LF
Tel: 0208 297 4500

In an out of hours emergency, Dr. Groves can be contacted through Matron's Office at the London Clinic on 020 7935 4444