



Bridget Walker, MD

~ Mohs Micrographic Surgeon

WOUND CARE INSTRUCTIONS FOR OPEN WOUNDS

Supplies to purchase:

- Cotton-tip applicators (e.g. Q-tips)
- Petrolatum ointment (e.g. Vaseline)
- Non-adherent dressing (e.g. Telfa)
- Gauze
- Paper tape (e.g. 3M micropore brown paper tape)
- Gentle soap (e.g. Dove)

Bandaging:

- Leave the original bandage on for 48 hours. It must be kept dry during this time. (If the bandage gets wet, remove it and rebandage as described below.)
- Wash your hands before each bandage change.
- After 48 hours, remove the bandage and gently clean the wound with soap and water. Do not scrub the wound, just let soapy water run over the area. Rinse with water and gently pat dry with gauze or a clean, dry cloth.
- Apply a thick layer of petrolatum ointment over the entire wound with a cotton-tip applicator. (It may be easier to apply the ointment directly to the non-adherent dressing, then place over the wound.)
- Cut the non-adherent dressing with a clean pair of scissors to fit over the wound. If the wound is large or draining, place some gauze over the non-stick dressing.
- Secure the dressing with paper tape.
- Repeat daily until the wound is entirely healed (when there are no longer any open areas or drainage, and the top of the wound looks like the surrounding skin). This usually takes 4-8 weeks. Leg wounds take an especially long time to heal, usually around 3-6 months.
- It is very important to avoid letting the wound dry out or form a scab, as this slows down the wound healing process! Do NOT leave it "open to air."

Restrictions:

- Avoid vigorous activity and exercise for 1 week after surgery (walking is okay). Increases in heart rate and blood pressure may cause increased bleeding. After 1 week, you may gradually resume your normal activities.