



---

**Bridget Walker, MD**

~ Mohs Micrographic Surgeon

## WOUND CARE INSTRUCTIONS FOR STITCHED 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 area, just let soapy water run over the wound. Rinse with water and gently pat dry with gauze or a clean, dry cloth.
- Apply a thin layer of petrolatum ointment to the wound with a cotton-tip applicator.
- 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 for **14 days**.

### Restrictions:

- Avoid lifting anything heavier than 10 pounds for 10 days after surgery. Heavy lifting may cause stitches to pop open.
- 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.
- Avoid swimming until the stitches on top of the skin have been removed or have completely dissolved.

### Optional:

- After 1 month, you may start to massage the scar. Place petrolatum ointment over the area and firmly massage along the length of the scar for 5 minutes up to 3 times per day. Scar massage helps the “lumpiness” smooth out and the redness fade more quickly. (Lumps underneath the scar are normal. These are usually due to the deep stitches placed underneath the skin which take 3-4 months to fully dissolve.)
- Silicone scar sheets or gel (e.g. Scar Away, Silagen) have been shown to help improve the appearance of scars. You may start to use these 1 month after surgery if desired.