



# Wound care after surgery

---

## Information for patients from Day Surgery

### How do I care for my dressing at home?

After your surgery, a dressing will be covering your wound. **Do not get it wet.**

You may be given a pressure dressing which should be kept on for 24 hours.

### How long do I keep the dressing on for?

- Keep your wound covered with a dressing for 48 hours, or longer if told to by Day Surgery staff.
- If your dressing is firmly stuck it is ok to soak it off, but do not be rough.

### How do I care for my wound once I have removed my dressing?

- Wash your hands with soap and water before cleaning your wound.
- Wash your wound carefully with clean warm water.
- Try and gently remove any dried blood or scabs.
- Pat your wound dry with a clean towel.
- **Maxillo Facial patients only.** When dry, cover your wound thickly with Vaseline or Polyfax ointment. The ointment will keep your wound clean, soft, and moist. Do not use antiseptic liquid / cream unless told to keep your wound dry.
- Cover your wound with a plaster, if told to by Day Surgery staff. Make sure the plaster is attached to the surrounding skin.

### What if my wound bleeds at home?

It is normal for there to be a little oozing or bleeding at the site of the surgery in the first few hours. This can be controlled by pressing firmly on your wound for 15 minutes.

Although you will not be sent home with a bleeding wound, occasionally minor oozing or bleeding may happen later. This can usually be controlled by pressing firmly on your wound for 30 minutes.

If your dressing gets soggy it may need to be replaced.

### **What if my wound hurts? Can I take painkillers?**

If your wound is painful, take paracetamol every 4 to 6 hours. Discomfort should improve over the next few days.

Please contact your GP, if you have either of the following. You may have got an infection, which will need antibiotics.

- Your discomfort continues, even after taking painkillers.
- Your wound becomes more painful.

### **When can I return to my normal activities?**

Do not do strenuous exercises, bend, or lift anything heavy for several days after your surgery. This can cause your wound to bleed, or your stitches may split open.

Do not smoke for the first week after surgery. Studies have shown that wound healing is significantly delayed by smoking, and the infection rate is much higher.

### **If I have had stitches, when will they be removed?**

- Dissolvable stitches do not need to be removed; they will dissolve on their own.
- If you have stitches that need removing, contact your hospital / GP nurse in \_\_\_\_\_ days and they can do this for you.

You will be told what stitches you have before you leave hospital.

### **When will I get my results?**

Normally results take 4 weeks to come back from the laboratory, longer if special tests are needed. You may be given a follow-up appointment to discuss these.

For minor procedures you may get your results in the post. These can take several weeks to arrive, so please be patient. Your GP will be sent a copy of your results.

### **Will I need further treatment?**

Sometimes a second procedure may be needed, depending on your results.

### **How will I feel once my wound has healed?**

- Your scar will be very red and firm at first, but will gradually become paler over time.
- The area around your wound may be numb for several weeks or months; this is normal.
- You may feel occasional sharp pains or 'twinges' near the scar as it settles.
- Your skin will not regain full strength for several months.

### What should I do if I have any concerns or questions?

If you have any queries or concerns, please contact Day Surgery on the numbers below or your GP.

- Canterbury Day Surgery Centre, **Kent and Canterbury Hospital**, Canterbury  
Telephone: 01227 783114 (7am to 8pm)
- Day Surgery, **Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (QEQM) Hospital**, Margate  
Telephone: 01843 234499 (Monday to Friday 7am to 9pm)  
Telephone: 07887 651162 (Monday to Friday 9pm to 7am) (Bank Holidays and weekends, 24 hours a day)
- Channel Day Surgery, **William Harvey Hospital**, Ashford  
Telephone: 01233 616263 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

### What do you think of this leaflet?

We welcome feedback, whether positive or negative, as it helps us to improve our care and services.

If you would like to give us feedback about this leaflet, please fill in our short online survey. Either scan the QR code below, or use the web link. We do not record your personal information, unless you provide contact details and would like to talk to us some more.

**Giving feedback about this leaflet**



<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/MDOBU4/>

If you would rather talk to someone instead of filling in a survey, please call the Patient Voice Team.

- **Patient Voice Team**  
Telephone: 01227 868605  
Email ([ekhuft.patientvoice@nhs.net](mailto:ekhuft.patientvoice@nhs.net))

**This leaflet has been produced with and for patients.**

**Please let us know:**

- If you have any accessibility needs; this includes needing a hearing loop or wanting someone to come with you to your appointment.
- If you need an interpreter.
- If you need this information in another format (such as Braille, audio, large print or Easy Read).

**You can let us know this by:**

- Visiting the Trust web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/ais>).
- Calling the number at the top of your appointment letter.
- Adding this information to the Patient Portal (<https://pp.ekhuft.nhs.uk/login>).
- Telling a member of staff at your next appointment.

**Any complaints, comments, concerns or compliments**, please speak to a member of your healthcare team. Or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 01227 783145 or email ([ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net)).

**Patients should not bring large sums of money or valuables into hospital.** Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property has been handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

**Further patient information leaflets** are available via the East Kent Hospitals' web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patient-information>).

Reference number: Web 115

First published:  
September 2007

Last reviewed:  
May 2025

Next review date:  
September 2028

Copyright © East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust.