

## **Post-Operative Wound Care Instructions**

### **Stapled Wound Care**

- No strenuous activity for 48 hours. No straining or lifting items over 10 lbs. These activities could increase bleeding. Avoid heavy exercising or any activity that may traumatize your surgical site for one week.
- Take Extra Strength Tylenol (acetaminophen 1000mg every 6 hours) as needed for discomfort.
- Keep the bandage in place for 24 hours. If the bandage becomes blood tinged or loose, reinforce it with gauze and tape.
- Remove bandage at \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_.
- Begin wound care as follows:
  1. Clean area with tap water using a Q-tip or gauze pad. (shower/bathe normally)
  2. Dry wound with gauze pad.
  3. Apply Vaseline to wound with a Q-tip. **Do NOT** use Neosporin.
  4. Cover the wound with a Band-Aid or nonstick gauze pad and paper tape.
  5. Repeat wound care once a day until staples are removed in 7-10 days.
- Smoking may impede wound healing and is not advised.
- Drinking alcohol can increase your risk for bleeding and is not advised for the first 48 hours after surgery.
- It is normal to have bruising and swelling around the surgical site. The bruising will fade in approximately two weeks but may linger for an extended period of time.
- For surgeries on **the arms, hands, legs, or feet**, elevate the area at rest with extra pillows to reduce swelling.
- For surgeries on the **head & neck** bruising and swelling may travel outside of the surgical site (i.e., from the forehead down to the eyes) and can get worse before it starts to improve. Keep head elevated with extra pillows when lying down or sleeping. Avoid bending down below your waist.

### **Expected Wound Healing**

- It may take six to twelve months for the redness to fade.
- You may have numbness, itchiness, and sensitivity to temperature changes for up to 18 months following surgery.
- One month after your surgery, you will need to begin massaging the surgery site.
  - Massage the site for 15 seconds five times a day until the site feels smooth.
  - Apply an adequate amount of pressure to the surgery site when massaging. This helps smooth out the dissolvable sutures underneath the skins surface.

### **Discharge Medication Reconciliation**

- Continue current at home medications.
- Oral medications administered at today's visit: \_\_\_\_\_
- Prescribed medications: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Possible Complications**

### **BLEEDING**

- Use tightly rolled up gauze or a dry washcloth to apply constant and direct pressure over the bandage for 20 minutes.
- Wait 5 minutes and then reapply pressure for an additional 20 minutes, if necessary. You can repeat this up to three times.
- Use additional gauze and tape to maintain pressure once the bleeding has stopped.

### **PAIN**

- Post-operative pain should slowly get better, never worse.
- If pain is not controlled by Tylenol alone, try alternating Tylenol (acetaminophen 1000mg) and Motrin (ibuprofen 800mg) every 6 hours. Do not exceed 4000mg of acetaminophen or 3200 mg of ibuprofen in a 24 hour period.
- *Do not take Tylenol or Motrin if you have been previously instructed by your doctor to avoid either medication.*
- *Do not take Motrin if you are actively having problems with bleeding.*

### **SIGNS OF INFECTION**

- Signs of infection can include increasing pain, redness spreading outside of the surgical site, large amounts of drainage, foul odor, swelling that does not improve over time, and warmth to area.
- A minimal amount of drainage from site can be normal.

### **CONTACT THE OFFICE AT (251) 544-6407 FOR THE FOLLOWING:**

- Bleeding not controlled by pressure.
- Increasing pain that is not controlled by over the counter medications.
- A drastic increase in swelling, redness, warmth, or pain around the wound.
- *If after hours, call the office number and follow the prompts to obtain Dr. Freeman's cell number.*
- *In the event of an emergency and you are unable to reach the physician, seek emergency medical treatment.*

## **Local Hospitals**

### **Mobile Infirmary**

5 Mobile Infirmary Circle  
Mobile, AL 36607  
(251) 435-2400

### **Providence Hospital**

6801 Airport Blvd  
Mobile, AL 36608  
(251) 633-1000

### **South Baldwin Regional Medical Center**

1613 N. McKenzie Street  
Foley, AL 36535  
(251) 949-3400

### **Sacred Heart**

1549 Airport Blvd  
Pensacola, FL 32504  
(850) 416-7000

### **Grove Hill Memorial Hospital**

295 South Jackson Street  
Grove Hill, AL 36451  
(251) 275-3191

### **Springhill Medical Center**

3719 Dauphin Street  
Mobile, AL 36608  
(251) 344-9630

### **Thomas Hospital**

750 Morphy Avenue  
Fairhope, AL 36532  
(251) 928-2375

### **North Baldwin Infirmary**

1815 Hand Avenue  
Bay Minette, AL 36507  
(251) 937-5521

### **Jackson Medical Center**

220 Hospital Drive  
Jackson, AL 36545  
(251) 246-9021