



Wound care after your surgery

This leaflet is for Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust patients coming in for an operation or procedure and explains how to look after your surgical wound.

Why is wound care important?

Wound care is essential for proper healing and recovery after surgery. Proper care of the wound can help prevent infection and help the wound to heal.

General advice on looking after your wound

- Keep your wound clean and dry.
- Whether you can shower or not depends on the dressing used on your wound. Your nurse will discuss this with you and will confirm when you can shower. You can shower _____ days following your surgery.
- If you have been told not to remove the dressing:
 - Check with the nurse if you can shower with the dressing in place. If not, you may be able to shower around a wound if you keep it dry or use a limb protector (you can buy them easily online) to cover the dressing.
 - Check if the dressing is still in place and dry after your shower.
 - You must arrange an appointment with GP to remove the dressing on _____
 - If you accidentally get the dressing wet, call your GP or the relevant phone number at the back of this leaflet for advice.
- If you do not have a dressing on or you are advised to change the dressing:
 - Wash your hands with soap and water before touching the dressing.
 - Remove the old dressing before showering.
 - Do not touch the healing wound with your fingers.
 - Do not scratch or remove any scabbing from the wound.
 - Do not put any soap, shower gel, body lotion or cream directly over your wound.
 - Pat the wound gently with a clean towel after showering.
 - There is a video on changing dressings at www.youtube.com/watch?v=sNS67ZJQVDA
- Carefully follow any post-op care advice given to you by your nurse or doctor on your ward – this may be verbal or written. Ask if you would like written advice.

We encourage you to take a photo of your wound regularly after your surgery to record and monitor the healing process and to look out for any signs of infection.

Signs of infection – what to look out for

- Has the wound re-opened or is it splitting or separating?
- Is there fluid leaking from your wound (this maybe a different colour – yellow, green, cloudy)?
- Is the wound feeling warmer or hot?
- Is the wound swollen?
- Are you experiencing increasing pain from the wound, which is not improving?
- Do you have a fever or are you feeling generally unwell?



← Example of early signs of infection



← Example of excessive fluid leaking from wound

What should I do if I have symptoms of infection?

If you experience any of these signs after surgery, please contact us during working hour:

- **General surgery patients:** please contact Surgical Assessment Unit on 0118 322 7541.
- **Orthopaedic patients:** please contact Outpatients Department on 0118 322 6938.
- **Urology patients:** please contact Hopkins Ward on 0118 322 7771 / 7274.

If it is urgent and you feel really unwell, please contact your GP or go to Emergency Department or your nearest Walk-in Centre.

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

RBFT Infection Prevention & Control, January 2025

Next review due: January 2027