



After your surgery, it's essential to care for your incision to ensure proper healing and avoid complications. Keeping the incision site clean and following your doctor's instructions will help reduce the risk of infection, minimize scarring, and manage any discomfort. Depending on your surgery, your incision may be closed with stitches, staples, tissue glue, or tape strips.

### To care for your incision:

- Keep the area clean and dry.
- Change the dressing as directed by your healthcare provider.
- Watch for signs of infection (See Below).

## SIGNS OF INFECTION

If you notice any of the following symptoms or have concerns about your healing process, contact your healthcare provider immediately.

### Redness

Increasing redness or red streaks spreading from the incision site.

### Fever

A fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, indicating possible systemic infection.

### Swelling

Noticeable swelling or puffiness around the incision that doesn't improve.

### Delayed Healing

The incision is not healing properly, or the wound edges aren't coming together as expected.

### Warmth

The skin around the incision feels unusually warm to the touch.

### Hardening

The area around the incision feels hard or firm to the touch.

### Pain

Increasing or persistent pain, especially if it worsens over time.

### Unexplained Fatigue

Feeling unusually tired or weak, which may be a sign of infection.

### Discharge

Pus or unusual discharge from the incision, which may be yellow, green, or have a foul odor.

It's normal for stitches or staples to cause some redness and swelling at the points where they enter the skin, along with mild irritation and itching. Some drainage from the incision may also be expected in the first few days after surgery. However, if the discharge doesn't decrease after a few days, becomes bright red with blood, or contains pus, contact your doctor immediately.

After certain surgeries, you may be given additional or special instructions for caring for your incision. Be sure to follow these instructions carefully. If you are unsure about any part of your care or have questions, call your doctor's office for clarification. Also, if your pain increases or you notice any signs of infection, contact your doctor immediately.



### WHAT NOT TO DO FOR POST-SURGICAL INCISION CARE

#### Don't Get the Incision Wet (Until Cleared by Your Doctor)

Avoid bathing in tubs, swimming, or soaking the incision in water.

Follow your doctor's advice on when it's safe to shower, as getting the incision wet too soon can increase the risk of infection.

#### Don't Remove the Bandage Too Soon

Keep the bandage or dressing on for as long as your doctor recommends. Removing it prematurely can expose the wound to dirt and bacteria, increasing the risk of infection.

#### Don't Apply Creams, Lotions, or Ointments (Unless Advised)

Avoid applying creams, oils, or powders to the incision unless specifically instructed by your healthcare provider. These can introduce bacteria or irritate the wound.

#### Don't Expose the Wound to Direct Sunlight

Keep the incision covered and avoid exposing it to sunlight. UV rays can darken the scar and slow the healing process.

#### Don't Scratch, Pick, or Scrub at the Incision

Even if it feels itchy, avoid scratching, picking, or scrubbing the incision. This can disrupt healing and introduce bacteria, potentially causing an infection.

#### Don't Engage in Strenuous Activity

Avoid heavy lifting, vigorous exercise, or movements that stretch the incision area until your doctor gives you clearance. These activities can stress the wound, slow healing, or cause the incision to reopen.

#### Don't Use Unsterilized Tools to Change the Dressing

Always use clean, sterile materials (such as gauze and medical tape) when changing the bandage to avoid introducing bacteria to the wound.

**By avoiding these actions and following your doctor's instructions, you can help ensure that your incision heals properly and reduce the risk of complications.**

If your incision is protected with tissue glue or small adhesive strips (like Steri-Strips) instead of a traditional bandage or dressing, follow these guidelines:

- If glue was used, ensure the incision area is dried immediately if it becomes wet. The glue will naturally fall off after some time.
- If adhesive strips were used, leave them in place until they loosen or fall off on their own.



### STEPS FOR APPLYING A COLLAGEN WOUND COVER

#### 1 Wash Your Hands

Wash your hands thoroughly with soap

#### 2 Prepare Supplies

- Open the collagen pad or powder (**A**) without touching the side that will go on the wound.
- Put on examination gloves (**D**).

#### 3 Remove the Old Dressing

- Gently peel off the old dressing.
- Use the provided alcohol wipes (**E**) to remove any adhesive left on your skin.

#### 4 Clean the Wound

- Change gloves.
- Spray the included wound wash(**C**)over the incision.
- Do not scrub or soak the wound.
- Avoid using rubbing alcohol, hydrogen peroxide, or iodine, as they can damage tissue.
- Let the wound air dry or gently pat it dry with sterile gauze.

#### 5 Prepare the Collagen Wound Cover

- Ensure the dressing covers (**A**) the entire wound bed.
- Do not touch the part of the dressing that will contact the wound to keep it sterile.

#### 6 Apply the Collagen Wound Cover

- Place the collagen pad or sprinkle the collagen powder (**A**) directly over the wound.
- Make sure it covers the entire area and makes good contact. Fold it if necessary.

#### 7 Secure the Dressing

- Use the included secondary bandage (**B**) to cover the collagen pad.
- Make sure it's snug but not too tight, so it doesn't restrict circulation.

#### 8 Dispose of Used Materials

- Discard used dressings and gloves in a sealed plastic bag.
- Wash your hands thoroughly after the dressing change