Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Caring for Your Surgical Wound After Your Discharge

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Patient and Carer Information

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Why have I been given this leaflet?

You will have been provided with this leaflet if you have recently undergone a minor or major surgical procedure and have been left with a surgical wound. Wound care is important to ensure your body can heal after your procedure. Wounds need to be monitored to ensure there is no excessive bleeding, no newly developing skin infections or any other post-operative complications. There are a few ways to receive wound care once you leave hospital. This leaflet will provide you with the necessary information about your surgical wound and how to arrange care for your wound.

Who will care for my wound?

We always recommend that a trained nurse or practitioner cares for surgical wounds. They will be able to determine whether the wound is healing properly and advise you whether your wound needs further specialist attention. Your wound may also require additional care, such as packing changes and clip or stitch removal that a trained professional will be able to do for you.

Once your wound has nearly healed, the clinician caring for your wound will advise you whether further appointments are necessary. Your wound will not be completely healed at this point but will be at a stage where you should be able to manage it on your own. If at any point you become concerned about your wound, please contact the Surgical Ambulatory Emergency Care Unit at Wigan Hospital.

When will my wound need caring for?

Approximately 24 hours after your procedure is when your wound will first require care. This is usually done by the surgical team at Wigan Hospital, as it gives them the opportunity to assess the wound and make sure the wound is healing well. After this, you will be discharged from the hospital.

Once you are discharged from the hospital, you will need to arrange for further wound care through the community health services. This will involve you attending local treatment centres where specially trained nursing staff will provide you with wound care. If you are unable to visit the treatment centres, the discharging ward will arrange for a district nurse to come and treat you at home.

We usually recommend you have your wound cared for every 48-72 hours. If you are unable to secure an appointment within 72 hours of your discharge from hospital, please contact the Surgical Ambulatory Emergency Care team who will be able to help you.

How do I know what type of care my wound needs?

You should be advised by the clinician who discharges you, about the type of care your wound will need and when it will need to be performed. If there are any additional care requirements for your wound, such as stitch or clip removal, you will be advised when this needs to happen. The clinicians in the community will know what types of dressings to use for your wound and will provide their own equipment and materials.

How long will my wound take to heal?

It is hard to predict how long it will take your wound to heal completely after your operation. Typically for smaller wounds we would say two or three weeks. Larger wounds can take from six to eight weeks. If there are any post-operative complications, such as wound infections or excessive bleeding, the healing process will be further delayed.

You will also be advised by the clinician discharging you about the sorts of activities you should avoid whilst your wound heals. We usually don’t advise any strenuous activity or heavy lifting for at least six weeks after an operation. If you require a Statement of Fitness for Work Certificate (sick note), this will be provided to you on your discharge from the hospital.

What if I am concerned about my wound?

It is very normal to feel mild pain and itching after a surgical procedure. These are part of the normal healing process. Pain that is not controlled well by simple pain killers such as paracetamol and ibuprofen should warrant further investigation and a review of the wound should be arranged. New redness surrounding the wound or bleeding from the wound site should also prompt you to seek help from a clinician.

Wound infections are the most common post-procedure complication. If the clinician caring for your wound suspects that you have a wound infection, they may take a sample from the surface of the wound with a swab. This is sent to the laboratory to determine if any bugs (bacteria) have grown in the wound. You may also be prescribed antibiotics to treat a wound infection.

If you have any concerns about your wound, please speak to the clinician caring for your wound, or contact the Surgical Ambulatory Emergency Care Unit who will be able to advise you.

Booking your wound care

The patient booking line is a service provided by Greater Manchester's Integrated Care Services. They provide such things as nursing, ear care, podiatry, counselling and other community-based services. To book an appointment, please telephone **0300 707 7700**

Weekdays (Monday to Friday) from 8am until 5pm.

If you are unable to secure an appointment for community-based care, please contact the **Surgical Ambulatory Emergency Care Team** on **0300 707 8663** (from 8am until 8pm Monday to Sunday). Alternatively, if your GP provides wound care services, you may wish to book in with them.

For further assistance with booking appointments, please contact:

Orrell Ward, Wigan Infirmary telephone **0300 707 2581**.

Appointment Diary

Date and time of appointment	Location	Name of the clinician



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