

Dr. Jillian Macdonald
Dr. Megan Lim
Mohs Surgery and Dermatology Clinic
The Ottawa Hospital - Parkdale Clinic
737 Parkdale Avenue
613-761-4069

IMPORTANT CONTACT NUMBERS

For post-operative questions/concerns Monday-Friday between 7am - 3pm, please call 613-761-4069 and ask for the Mohs nurse.

FOR EMERGENCIES ONLY, call 613-761-4221 and ask for the Dermatology Resident covering Mohs.

WOUND CARE

Leave the pressure dressing on for 48 HOURS after surgery and keep it dry. You may shower from the neck down if you are able to keep the dressing dry.

- After 2 days, remove the pressure dressing.
- Once removed, gently clean the area with soapy warm water. Do not scrub the area. You may shower at this time. Do not allow the shower pressure to hit the site directly (it is often easy to soak it in the shower/bath to loosen the dressing).
- Pat dry.
- Apply a thin layer of ONLY VASELINE / PLAIN PETROLATUM to the surgical site once daily to prevent scabbing until the stitches are dissolved. Do not let the wound "dry out" - it will heal best in a moist environment. Do not use Polysporin.
- Cover with a non-stick dressing or Band-Aid
- Do this care once a day, every day for 2 weeks (or longer if still crusted/not fully healed)

Please let us know if you would like us to set up homecare/CCAC to help you with dressing changes before you leave on the day of surgery.

If your wound is left open to heal without stitches (healing by second intention/granulation), be sure to apply a thick layer of vaseline two to three times per day. Do not let the wound dry out or form a dry scab. It is normal for the wound to drain clear to yellow fluid for the first few days.

BLEEDING

It is not uncommon and normal to have mild bleeding and oozing after the surgery. Apply constant, direct and firm pressure to the bleeding site for 45 minutes. If bleeding continues, hold pressure for another 30 minutes. If bleeding persists, please call our clinic or emergency number if it is after hours. If you cannot get through, go to the emergency room. Don't use your nicest bedding and clothes for 2 days after surgery in case you have any bleeding.

SWELLING AND BRUISING

It is very common and normal to have swelling and bruising around the surgery site and this usually lasts 1 week. To help with swelling and mild discomfort, you may apply ice to the surgical

site for 10-15 minutes every hour (while awake) for the first 3-4 days. This is especially important if your surgery is on the cheeks or nose as swelling around the eyes is quite dramatic and tends to be delayed, peaking around day 3 or 4. Be sure to wrap the ice in a clean, dry cloth so the dressing does not get wet.

PAIN

When you get home, take extra strength Tylenol (1000mg) every 6-8 hours for the first 48 hours after surgery, then take as needed, for relief. You can also take Advil 600mg every 6-8 hours (unless there is a medical reason you cannot take NSAIDs/ibuprofen such as taking blood thinners, kidney problems etc). Stagger your Advil and Tylenol doses (i.e. one drug every 4 hours). Alternatively, both medications can be taken at the same time safely, if needed.

REST

Rest is very important after surgery. You should not do any heavy lifting, bending or vigorous exercise for 1 week. Limit activities that get your heart rate or blood pressure elevated. This is to minimize the tension placed on your stitches and optimize the aesthetic result. No swimming for two weeks.

INFECTION

A small red area around your incision is a normal reaction and does not necessarily indicate infection. If you experience signs of infection such as fever, chills, sweats, increased redness that is spreading beyond the incision line, swelling, warmth, drainage of pus or worsening pain to touch, call the clinic immediately.

SMOKING

Please refrain from smoking as this will slow your healing and negatively impact the appearance of your scar.

WHAT YOU SHOULD EXPECT

Your wound may feel tight, itchy or numb and this will gradually improve over the next months. As scars heal, they often look red, raised and bumpy. It takes 12-18 months for a scar to “mature” and achieve the final cosmetic result. Every month the appearance and feeling will continue to improve gradually.

Normal sensation typically returns by ~6 months. As nerves regenerate, it is normal for the area to feel numb, itchy, and you may experience a crawling sensation or sharp shooting pains. In some cases, the area remains permanently numb.

Although every effort will be made to offer a suitable cosmetic result, the surgery will result in a scar. The scar can be minimized by the proper care of your wound.

As your incision heals, small white or pink “pimple-like” bumps in the skin along the incision may appear within the first 3-12 weeks. These are spitting sutures (internal dissolvable stitches that are rejected by your body before they can completely dissolve). If you notice a small suture

poking through the skin, try to gently remove it with tweezers or trim it flush with the skin using scissors. These spitting sutures can cause swelling, redness, pus, oozing and sometimes look like a pimple. This is normal and will eventually go away on its own over the course of a few weeks to months.

SUNSCREEN

Wait until the wound is fully healed before applying sunscreen directly onto it, about 2-4 weeks after your surgery. Once your wound is healed, apply sunscreen directly onto the scar and your entire face with SPF30+ and wear a hat. Scars and skin grafts exposed to sunlight can turn a brown color that is very visible and is permanent. This can be avoided by applying sunscreen to the scar diligently.

MASSAGE

You can start massaging the scar once it is fully healed, 4 weeks after surgery. The pressure will help break down, soften and remodel the stiff, newly formed scar tissue helping it become smoother, softer, flatter and more flexible. Massage or knead the scar in firm circular motions for 5-10 minutes once to twice daily.

SCAR REDUCTION PRODUCTS

Several products are available to help reduce the appearance of scars. Silicone-containing scar gels and sheats are the most effective. If you choose to try any of these products, wait until the wound is fully healed (which is typically 2-4 weeks after your surgery) and use as directed on the packaging.

REDNESS AND BROKEN BLOOD VESSELS

It is normal for a wound to appear red as it heals. This typically improves/resolves by 1 year but sometimes can leave stubborn dilated blood vessels. Broken blood vessels can be treated with a laser; you can ask your Dermatologist about this option. It is not covered by OHIP which results in an out of pocket charge to the patient.

WILL YOU DEVELOP MORE SKIN CANCERS?

After having one skin cancer, statistics say that you have a higher chance of developing a second (unrelated to the first, on other sun-exposed areas). The damage that your skin has already received from the sun cannot be reversed. However, there are precautions that can be taken to prevent further skin cancers. You should apply a broad spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or greater every single day to your face, neck and ears. You should also apply on sun exposed areas if you are going out. A wide-brimmed hat, long sleeve shirt, other protective clothing and sunglasses are also appropriate. Avoidance of excessive sunshine is recommended.

PLEASE READ IMPORTANT REMINDERS

*MOHS SURGERY MAY TAKE THE ENTIRE DAY - UNTIL SUPPER TIME. PLEASE COME PREPARED.

*THERE ARE SIX PEOPLE SIMULTANEOUSLY HAVING SURGERY EACH DAY. EVERY EFFORT IS MADE TO BE EFFICIENT, HOWEVER PATIENT SAFETY AND PERFORMING SURGERY TO THE HIGHEST STANDARDS ARE OUR PRIORITIES. THERE ARE MANY FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE TIME IT TAKES TO PROCESS THE TISSUE AND IT IS A HIGHLY SPECIALIZED PROCESS. WAIT TIMES THROUGHOUT THE DAY ARE UNPREDICTABLE.

*YOU ARE NOT PERMITTED TO LEAVE THE MOHS UNIT UNTIL DISCHARGED.

*PLEASE BRING ANY MEDICATIONS YOU TAKE THROUGHOUT THE DAY. TAKE YOUR MEDICATIONS LIKE NORMAL. If you are taking 81mg ASA (aspirin) for prevention, please stop this 10 days prior to your surgery date. Do not stop other blood thinners like warfarin, Xarelto, Plavix etc...

*PLEASE ARRANGE TO BE PICKED UP. YOU ARE NOT PERMITTED TO DRIVE HOME.

*THERE ARE NO DIETARY RESTRICTIONS. YOU MAY HAVE FOOD THE NIGHT BEFORE AND/OR THE MORNING OF SURGERY. YOU ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO BRING SNACKS AND/OR A LUNCH.