

Skin Lesion Removal: What to Expect at Home

Your Recovery

After your procedure, you should not have much pain. But some soreness, swelling, or bruising is normal. Your doctor may recommend over-the-counter medicines to help with any discomfort. Most people can return to their normal routine the same day of their procedure.

How quickly your wound heals depends on the size of your wound and the type of procedure you had. Most wounds take 1 to 3 weeks to heal. If you had laser surgery, your skin may change color and then slowly return to its normal color.

You may need only a bandage, or you may need stitches. If you had stitches, your doctor will probably remove them 5 to 14 days later. If you have the type of stitches that dissolve, they do not have to be removed. They will disappear on their own.

This care sheet gives you a general idea about how long it will take for you to recover. But each person recovers at a different pace. Follow the steps below to get better as quickly as possible.

How can you care for yourself at home?



Activity

- For the first few days, try not to bump or knock your wound.
- Depending on where your wound is, you may need to avoid strenuous exercise for 2 weeks after the procedure or until your doctor says it is okay.
- If you have had a lesion removed from your face, do not use makeup near your wound until you have your stitches taken out.
- Ask your doctor when it is okay to shower, bathe, or swim.



Medicines

- Your doctor will tell you if and when you can restart your medicines. He or she will also give you instructions about taking any new medicines.
- If you take aspirin or some other blood thinner, ask your doctor if and when to start taking it again. Make sure that you understand exactly what your doctor wants you to do.
- Be safe with medicines. Take pain medicines exactly as directed.
 - If the doctor gave you a prescription medicine for pain, take it as prescribed.
 - If you are not taking a prescription pain medicine, ask your doctor if you can take an over-the-counter medicine.

Wound care

- If your doctor told you how to care for your incision, follow your doctor's instructions. If you did not get instructions, follow this general advice:
 - Keep the wound bandaged and dry for the first day.
 - After the first 24 to 48 hours, wash around the wound with clean water 2 times a day. Don't use hydrogen peroxide or alcohol, which can slow healing.
 - You may cover the wound with a thin layer of petroleum jelly, such as Vaseline, and a nonstick bandage.
 - Apply more petroleum jelly and replace the bandage as needed.
- If you have stitches, you may get other instructions.
- If a scab forms, do not pull it off. Let it fall off on its own. Wounds heal faster if no scab forms. Washing the area every day and using petroleum jelly will help prevent a scab from forming.
- If the wound bleeds, put direct pressure on it with a clean cloth until the bleeding stops.
- If you had a growth "frozen" off, you may get a blister. Do not break it. Let it dry up on its own. It is common for the blister to fill with blood. You do not need to do anything about this, but if it becomes too painful, call your doctor.
- Avoid the sun until your stitches are removed.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

When should you call for help?



Call 911 anytime you think you may need emergency care. For example, call if:

- You passed out (lost consciousness).
- You have severe trouble breathing.
- You have sudden chest pain and shortness of breath, or you cough up blood.

Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- You have symptoms of a blood clot in your leg (called a deep vein thrombosis), such as:
 - Pain in the calf, back of the knee, thigh, or groin.
 - Redness and swelling in your leg or groin.
- You have signs of infection, such as:
 - Increased pain, swelling, warmth, or redness.
 - Red streaks leading from the wound.
 - Pus draining from the wound.
 - A fever.
- You have pain that does not get better after you take pain medicine.
- You have loose stitches.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if you have any problems.

Where can you learn more?

Go to <https://www.healthwise.net/patiented>

Enter **Q228** in the search box to learn more about "**Skin Lesion Removal: What to Expect at Home**".

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