

Caring for Your Wound at Home



Recovering from surgery takes time and care. This guide will help you look after your wound, spot signs of infection and heal as safely and quickly as possible.

! Warning Signs: When to Seek Help

- Pain that is getting worse and not relieved by medication
- Redness, swelling, heat, or smelly discharge around your wounds
- Fevers, chills, or flu-like symptoms
- The wound edges start to open or separate

Call us on 02 9997 7346. After hours, attend your nearest emergency department or call 000.

Keeping the Wound Clean

Generally, you do not need to change your dressing unless it becomes very soiled or wet underneath. If you do not have a spare dressing, see your local pharmacy. Hand hygiene and good wound care is critical. Always wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least 1 minute before and after touching the area under your dressing. Dry with a clean towel.

✗ While your wound heals, do not:

- Scratch or pick at the wound
- Apply creams, lotions or powders unless told to do so
- Swim, soak in a bath or use a spa/sauna for 2 to 3 weeks (showers are fine)

● Waterproof dressings

Keep the dressing on for 2 weeks. You can shower with it, then pat dry with a clean towel. Steri-strips (small tapes) sit underneath. If the outer dressing peels off, replace it, but leave the steri-strips alone.

● Exposed Wounds

Shower gently, then pat the wound dry with a clean towel or paper towel. Do not scrub at it.

Special instructions for head and scalp wounds

You may wash your hair with shampoo. Pat the wound dry after showering. Apply Chlorsig (chloramphenicol) ointment, morning and night, with clean hands, for the first 7 days.

What to Expect

Pain

Some pain for several days to weeks is normal. Take prescribed analgesia as instructed. We suggest regular paracetamol for at least the first 5 days after surgery.

Bleeding

Small amounts of bleeding on the dressing is normal. If bleeding increases, apply gentle pressure for 10 minutes, followed by an ice pack for 10 minutes.

Bruising and Swelling

Usually appears a few days after surgery and can persist for a month or more. This generally resolves on its own.

Scarring

The wound starts flat, then over a few weeks may change colour and become tight, raised, or lumpy. It softens and fades over the next 12–24 months. After 6 weeks you can apply scar treatment creams or gels if you wish.

Special Instructions for Hernia Repairs

A recurrent bulge

It is very common to see a bulge where the hernia was. This is usually a normal collection of fluid and blood post surgery and will settle with time.

Bruising

The groin or scrotum may turn black or blue and feel heavy. This settles on its own. Some men find tight underwear gives support and relief.



If you were given an abdominal binder

- Weeks 1 and 2: Wear it 24 hours a day. Remove it only to shower.
- Weeks 2 to 6: Wear it during the day only.

Diet

Your body needs energy to rebuild tissue. For the first week after surgery, prioritise rest and nutrition. A high-protein diet, plenty of vegetables and good hydration (1.5–2L of water per day) may help you heal faster.

Your Follow-up Appointment

Our clinic nurse will see you approximately two weeks after surgery. Please call **02 9997 7346** to book your follow-up if you don't already have one scheduled. Keep your dressings on until this appointment unless advised otherwise.