



**SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO  
SURGERY CENTER**

# Facial Wounds Lacerations

## Antibiotic Ointment

Keep the wounds covered with antibiotic ointment at all times. This is very important because the top layer, also known as the epithelium, is able to heal about twice as fast if it is kept moist and is not allowed to dry out or form a scab. This is best accomplished by keeping a layer of greasy ointment over the cuts, scrapes or wounded skin continuously. There is no fixed number of times that ointment should be applied. However, it may need to be done as many as 10 or 15 times a day in order to assure that the wound is continuously covered. A wide variety of ointments may be used. Antibiotic ointments containing the antibiotic Neomycin are usually OK, but can occasionally cause a rash and for that reason may be better avoided. Antibiotic ointments can be obtained over the counter, usually in the drug store or even in the grocery store. Although the antibiotic component of the ointment is beneficial, the most important component is the petroleum jelly base which keeps the wound moist, and in fact if no antibiotic ointment is available, plain Vaseline will usually work just as well.

## Bandages

It is usually not necessary to bandage most wounds except possibly at night when the ointment might be wiped off on the sheets, or if a child is likely to pick at the stitches, or if there is a high chance of contamination with dirt. On the other hand there is no harm in covering wounds.

## Cleaning of Wounds

Although it is a good idea to keep large amounts of contaminated water out of the wound, it is generally OK to allow clean shower water to wash over the wound as long as no scrubbing is performed. The wound may be additionally cleaned lightly once or twice a day if desired. If crusts of mucous or blood accumulate a good way to remove these is with the gentle application of hydrogen peroxide on Q-Tips, or lightly dabbing with clean gauze. The hydrogen peroxide will loosen the crusts and allow easy removal with little rubbing. After the wounds are cleaned, of course it is important to recover them with antibiotic ointment.

## Wound Infection

Wound infection is relatively unlikely in the face or scalp because the blood supply of these areas is so good. However if a wound infection occurs you should notify Dr. Frost or another Doctor if he is not available. Signs of a wound infection include a large amount of pus coming from the wound, marked progressive swelling around the wound, or a marked increase in redness and tenderness around the wound(although some redness, swelling and bruising are to be expected even without an infection). Also, a fever over 101 would indicate an infection as well.

## Suture Removal

Sutures will be usually removed between 5 and 8 days. If you do not already have an appointment you should contact Dr. Frost's office to arrange for suture removal at approximately this time. After the sutures are removed it is a good idea to keep the wounds covered with ointment for approximately 2-3 additional days. Also, any areas of scrapes or raw surfaces on the skin should be covered with ointment until the skin has completely covered the surface.

## Antibiotics

Frequently antibiotics will be prescribed to help prevent infection of the wounds, especially if the wounds have occurred as a result of injury. If the wounds are the result of planned surgical procedure, antibiotics may not be necessary.

## Pain/Nausea Medications

Dr. Frost will prescribe appropriate pain medications for you. If these include narcotics, such as Tylenol with Codeine or Lortab, only as much pain medication as is necessary to relieve the pain should be used, as higher doses can cause nausea. If it is necessary to take large doses of pain medications it is probably a good idea to rest while taking these medications because activity combined with narcotics will be more likely to cause nausea. Also remember not to drive or operate machinery when you are taking nausea medications.

Dr. Frost may prescribe a medication for nausea, usually Phenergan. This only needs to be used if you are nauseated either as a result of taking the pain medication, or if you have undergone general anesthesia which can also cause nausea. Frequently nausea medicine, is available either as a pill or as a suppository, depending on what is appropriate for the patient and the patient's preference.

- Follow up appointment: Call Dr. Frost's office for scheduled appointment. Resume medications unless otherwise instructed by your physician.
- If you have specific questions regarding your discharge instructions, contact Southern New Mexico Surgery Center between the hours of 0800 am - 0500 pm, Monday through Thursday @ (575) 437-0890 and ask to speak to nurse.
- If you have questions or problems with your prescriptions or surgical procedure, please call the physician office at (575) 437-4533.
- After hour care is handled by the physician office @ (575) 437-4533. One of our doctors is on call 24 hours a day. If you have a emergency or need immediate medical treatment, go to the emergency room or call 911.

**I have read/been read the instructions and understand them. A copy has been given to me.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Patient / Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nurse Signature

**Patient Label**