

## Caring for Your Stitches After a Minor Procedure

### Victoria General (VG) Site, QE II

#### Incision (cut) care

- For 24 to 48 hours (1 to 2 days) after your procedure:
  - › Keep your bandage on.
  - › **Do not get the bandage wet.**
- After 48 hours:
  - › Remove the bandage.
  - › You may shower. **Do not** spray water directly on the incision.
  - › **Do not** soak in a tub, swimming pool, or hot tub.
  - › Pat the area dry. **Do not** rub. You may put petroleum jelly (like Vaseline®) on your stitches (also called **sutures**) for \_\_\_\_\_ days. Then put a new bandage over the incision, or leave it open to the air, as told by your health care team.
- If you have **Steri-Strips™** (strong pieces of tape):
  - › Leave them on for \_\_\_\_\_ days. If they fall off, you can replace them.
  - › You may get the Steri-Strips™ wet 24 to 48 hours after your procedure. Pat the incision dry after showering. **Do not rub.**

#### Pain

- If you have pain or discomfort after the freezing wears off, you can take acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Advil®). Follow the instructions on the package.

#### Bleeding

- If you have bleeding, raise the area up (if possible). Put firm, constant pressure on the area for 15 to 20 minutes.
- If the bleeding does not stop and it is between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., call your surgeon:
  - › Surgeon: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_
- If you cannot reach your surgeon or it is after hours, go to the nearest Emergency Department right away.

## Infection

- Signs of infection:
  - › Fever (temperature above 38 °C or 100.4 °F)
  - › Redness, heat, or new or worse pain at the incision site
  - › Yellow or green pus draining from the incision site
- **If you have signs of an infection and it is between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., call your surgeon.**
- **If you cannot reach your surgeon or it is after hours:**
  - › Call your primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner).
  - › You can also go to a walk-in clinic or call 811.

## Activity

- Based on the procedure you had, your health care team will tell you what activities to avoid.
  - ☐ **Do not** do strenuous (hard) activity or exercise.
  - ☐ **Do not** lift more than 10 pounds for \_\_\_\_\_ days, or until your stitches are removed.

## Other instructions:

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## Stitch removal

- ☐ Your stitches will dissolve (go away on their own) over the next few weeks. They do not need to be removed.
- ☐ You will need to have your stitches removed in \_\_\_\_\_ days by your primary health care provider or at a walk-in clinic.

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

*Prepared by: General Surgery Clinic, VG, QE II  
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