

**J. Jason Wendel, M.D.**

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# Postoperative Instructions

**SKIN CANCER SURGERY AND RECONSTRUCTION**

This is generally an outpatient surgery.

Have someone drive you home after the procedure if you had any anesthesia or sedation. If the procedure was done completely under local anesthesia and you are pain free, you can drive yourself home.

Get plenty of rest; follow balanced diet.

Decreased activity and pain medication may promote constipation, so you may want to add more fresh fruit to your diet, and be sure to increase fluid intake.

Take pain medication as prescribed. Do not take aspirin or any products containing aspirin.

Do not drink alcohol when taking pain medications.

If you are taking vitamins with iron, resume these as tolerated.

Do not smoke, as smoking delays healing and increases the risk of complications.

**Activities**

Walk as soon as possible, as this helps reduce swelling and lowers the chance of blood clots.

Do not drive until you are no longer taking narcotic pain medications.

Resume normal activities gradually.

Return to work in 1-2 days, depending upon extent of surgery.

**Incision Care**

Avoid exposing scars to sun for at least 12 months.

Always use a strong sunblock, if sun exposure is unavoidable (SPF 30 or greater).

Keep steri-strips in place. If they fall off you may leave them off.

Keep incisions clean, dry and inspect daily for signs of infection.

Showering is permitted 48 hours after the procedure.

No tub soaking while sutures are in place.

**What To Expect**

Some bruising and swelling.

May have slight bleeding from incision. Apply 4x4 gauze with slight pressure to control bleeding.

Skin grafts and flaps may take several weeks or months to heal.

**Appearance**

Depending upon the type, size and location of the cancer, you may have a barely visible scar or a slightly larger, white scar or need further reconstructive procedures.

**Follow-Up Care**

Have regular follow-up visits as scheduled by your dermatologist to ensure the cancer has not recurred and for skin screening.

**When To Call**

If you have increased swelling or bruising.

If swelling and redness persist after a few days.

If you have increased redness along the incision.

If you have severe or increased pain not relieved by medication.

If you have any side effects to medications; such as, rash, nausea, headache, vomiting.

If you have an oral temperature over 100.4 degrees.

If you have any yellowish or greenish drainage from the incisions or notice a foul odor.

If you have bleeding from the incisions that is difficult to control with light pressure.

If you have loss of feeling or motion.

**For Medical Questions, Please Call:**

(615) 921-2100 Monday-Thursday 9:00 AM-5:00 PM and Fridays 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM. After hours and on weekends, the answering service will contact Dr. Wendel or the plastic surgeon on call.