

# Neuroscience: patient information

# Caring for your surgical wound following a craniotomy



Hope Building  
Ward H7  
0161 206 5679



Health & care  
information  
you can trust

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## Caring for your surgical wound

This leaflet provides information / advice about caring for your surgical wound after you have left the hospital.

Below are measures you can take to lower the risks of your wound developing infection and to promote the healing process.

Your wound may feel numb around your scar and you may notice a dent where your operation was, both are normal and usually improve with time.

You may experience 'swooshing' or 'clicking' especially when eating, again this is normal and will improve with time and healing.

## Post-operative pain

Craniotomies can, in some cases, be followed by a moderate amount of scalp pain and swelling.

Sometimes you may notice some facial swelling.

This pain can usually be controlled with Paracetamol or Codeine as prescribed at time of discharge from the ward or GP.

## Changing the dressing

Your original dressing can remain in place for up to 2 days (or as advised by the nurse/ neurosurgeon), providing that the wound is not oozing. Some patients will not require a dressing.

The wound must be kept dry for 2 days. If the dressing becomes wet from blood or other fluid, the dressing must be changed.

Before you remove and change the dressing you should:

- Wash your hands with soap and water
- Carefully remove the soiled dressing
- Avoid touching the healing wound directly with your fingers

If the wound is healing it can be left without a dressing. Some people prefer to have a dressing to cover and protect the wound, especially if spectacles rub against the area.

In some circumstances we can supply replacement dressings for use at home where necessary.

When applying, take care not to touch the inside of the dressing, so that it remains clean.

Do not apply antiseptic ointments under the dressing.

## Taking care of stitches / clips (staples)

Dissolving (absorbable) stitches usually disappear in 7-10 days' time. Others such as clips or non-dissolvable sutures need to be removed between 5-10 days, (maybe longer in case of redo surgery).

Your Neurosurgeon or Nurse will advise you on the day of discharge when you will need to have them removed and you will be given a letter for your District Nurse/Practice Nurse regarding removing the stitches/clips (staples).

You may see nylon thread (the end of the stitches) poking out of your healing scar (wound). Please do not pull on these. If the loose ends are catching on clothing, carefully trim the stitch with a clean pair of scissors.

If you are worried about the stitches, always seek advice from the ward, your Specialist Nurse or GP. Otherwise wait for them to be removed or for them to fall off or dissolve.

## Showering and hair washing

Showering is preferable to bathing. Dressing can be removed before having a shower.

You may wash your hair with care, 48-72 hours after surgery, (this will be discussed with you prior to discharge by your neurosurgeon or Nurse).

Do not put any soap, shower gel, body lotion, talcum powder or other bathing products directly onto the healing wound.

We would advise using a mild shampoo and to avoid rigorous rubbing of the wound area as this can cause increased pain and will disturb the healing process.

Pat the wound gently with a clean towel until dry. Avoid hair colourants and perm solutions until approx. 4-6 weeks after the surgery or as advised by your surgeon.

## Problems with wound healing

Your Doctors and Nurses will do everything that they can to prevent your wound from becoming infected whilst you remain in hospital but it is important that you know who to tell if you think your wound is developing an infection after you go home.

Signs of infection:

- Increased pain in and around the wound
- Increased swelling and redness in and around the wound
- Oozing discharge or leakage of blood-like fluid, clear fluid pus
- Unpleasant smell
- Raised temperature

## Contacts / further information

If you notice any of the signs mentioned above, or have any concerns about your wound, then contact Ward H7 and ask for an appointment in the review clinic, your Clinical Nurse Specialist or your GP.

### Ward H7

 **0161 206 5679**

### Clinical Nurse Specialists

Alison Gilston-Hope

 **0161 206 2073**

 ***alison.gilston-hope@srft.nhs.uk***

Sarah Cundliffe

 **0161 206 0613**

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Arabic

إذا كنتم بحاجة الى تفسير او ترجمة هذا الرجاء الاتصال

Chinese

如果需要翻译，请拨打电话

Farsi

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**0161 206 0224**

or Email:

**InterpretationandTrans@srft.nhs.uk**

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