

Wound and Dressing Care

This leaflet provides information about how to look after your child's dressings and wounds following discharge from hospital after surgery under the plastic surgery team. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to the staff member in charge of your child's care.

Will there be any pain?

If your child has had a general anaesthetic, s/he will also have had local anaesthetic injected into their wound to try to make the area as painless as possible after the operation. This will normally last a few hours and it is important your child has some oral pain relief before the local anaesthetic wears off completely.

It is recommended you give your child painkillers such as paracetamol and ibuprofen at regular intervals for one to two days after their surgery. If you need any advice about this, please speak to your doctor or GP or call the medicines information patient helpline on 020 8725 1033.

What do I need to do after my child comes home?

It is important that you encourage your child to rest for the first few days after their operation, to try to stop them knocking or banging the wound and causing bleeding and more pain. If your child has a dressing, you will be told how long it needs to stay on before they leave the ward.

Some dressings are waterproof and allow the child to get the area wet after 48 hours, you will be informed by the nursing staff if your child's dressing is waterproof. For all other dressings and bandages it is very important that the dressing stays dry and as clean as possible. Wet dressings can delay healing and increase the risk of infection. Cover the dressing with a plastic bag to help protect it from splashing and don't let your child submerge it. If the dressing gets wet, please contact the ward from which your child was discharged or go to the emergency department (ED or A&E) at St George's Hospital so it can be changed.

If the ends of the bandage start to become loose, stick them down with tape. If the bandage is slipping off, don't pull it back up, as this may cause friction to the wound.

If the dressing does come off, please contact the ward from which your child was discharged or go to the emergency department (ED or A&E) at St George's Hospital so a new one can be applied.

If your child doesn't have a dressing, keep their wound dry for 48 hours. After this time, it is fine to get the area wet but don't submerge the area in water for the first week.

If the wound is on the lip, apply a soft yellow paraffin such as Vaseline daily to stop the lips getting dry and the wound 'scabby'.

It is important to look out for any signs of infection in the wound, which can be hard if your child has a dressing. If your child develops any of the following symptoms, please seek medical advice straight away:

- an increase in pain
- feeling unwell in themselves
- an offensive smell or redness under the dressing.

If your child has no dressing and you can see their wound, check for any redness around it or discharge from it. If you see any, seek medical advice.

Will there be a follow-up appointment?

Your child's follow up will depend on the operation they have had.

You may need to take your child to see the nurse in the dressing clinic seven to 14 days after their operation and then see the doctor in a few weeks or you may need to take them to see the nurse and the doctor at the same time. If your child needs to come to the dressing clinic to have their dressings removed, please give them some pain relief, paracetamol or ibuprofen, before coming to make them comfortable.

Due to the specialist nature of plastic surgery, follow up will usually be arranged at St George's Hospital. If it's something that can be dealt with by your GP or practice nurse we may ask you to make an appointment at your surgery.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's nail bed injury, wound or dressing, please contact the ward from which s/he was discharged:

Nicholls ward on 020 8725 3389 or 020 8725 2098

Freddie Hewitt ward on 020 8725 2074

Pinckney ward on 020 8725 2082 (all 24 hours)

Jungle ward on 020 8725 2034 (7.30am to 8pm).

You can also contact the paediatric plastic surgery clinical nurse specialist on 020 8725 2656 and leave a message on the answering machine.

If your query or concern is urgent please don't leave a message but contact the ward from which your child was discharged, numbers above. For follow up appointments please contact the plastic surgery appointment desk on 020 8725 5855.

Out of hours, please contact the on call plastic surgery senior house officer via the hospital switchboard 020 8672 1255.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings (near the lift foyer).

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

Web: www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Tel: 111

AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.



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