

Surgical Services of Athens

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Skin and Soft Tissue Surgery Post-Operative Instructions

- A post-operative visit has been arranged as noted in your paperwork. You may call the office during business hours to verify your post-operative visit date and time if needed. Office hours are 8am-12pm and 2pm-5pm Monday through Thursday and 8am-12pm on Friday. An on-call physician is available at all times for emergencies; however, we ask that you call during business hours for non-emergent and routine questions.
- Driving after surgery is not recommended until prescription pain medication is no longer needed. You may typically drive if narcotic pain medication has not been taken within 24 hours.
- Your incisions may be closed with staples. If present, there will either be a gauze dressing over the staples, or a PICO Vac battery powered dressing. If you have a standard dressing, it may be removed 24 hours after your surgery, unless otherwise instructed. It may be replaced with a similar dry gauze dressing as needed for protection of the underlying staples.
- Your incisions may be closed with absorbable sutures located just below the skin, and if so, they will be covered with Steri-strips, which are a white tape-like dressing applied directly to the skin. These strips may be covered with a Bandaid or a Tegaderm (a clear dressing). You may remove the Band aids or clear dressings 24 hours after surgery, but please try to leave the Steri-strips intact until they gradually lose adhesion and fall off. Do not panic if the Steri-strips fall off.
- Your incisions may be closed with standard, non-absorbable sutures. If present, you may remove your dressing after 24 hours, and you may shower. Gently pat the sutures dry. You may wish to apply an OTC antibiotic ointment, such as Neosporin or Polysporin to the incision line once or twice daily. You may replace the outer dressing with gauze and paper tape, or a Bandaid to protect the suture line.
- If you have a PICO vac battery powered dressing, do not remove the dressing from the skin. It will be easily removed in the office in approximately one week or less. You should see an intermittently blinking green "OK" light when the device is properly functioning.
- You may shower 24 hours after surgery, unless otherwise instructed. If a drain is in place, you should keep the drain insertion site dry. You should take off the outer dressings prior to bathing, except for a PICO vac dressing, if present. The Steri-strips are water-resistant. Pat the incisions dry after the shower. You should avoid bathing in a bathtub or swimming until cleared by your surgeon.
- If you have a PICO Vac, the dressing is water-resistant, but the battery pack should remain dry. Simply press the on/off button on the battery back to turn off the device, and gently unscrew the battery pack tubing as instructed. After showering, pat the dressing dry, screw the battery pack tubing into place, and press the on/off button to turn on the device.
- If you have a drain in place, please strip the drain tubing as instructed twice daily, and empty the bulb and record the output from the drain. Please bring your output log to the post-op office visit. It is normal to leak some watery fluid around the drain site, especially the first few days after surgery. We recommend that you take a dose of pain medication about 1 hour prior to the office visit if you anticipate drain removal during the visit.
- Prescription pain medication may cause nausea and will often cause constipation. Do not take Tylenol (acetaminophen) within 4 hours of taking a narcotic pain medication.
- The on-call physician will not be able to provide narcotic pain medication. By law, narcotic pain medication cannot be called in to a pharmacy.

- Notify us for fever over 101, or go to the nearest ER immediately for significant shortness of breath.
- Some redness around the incision is expected and does not require antibiotics; however, if the redness significantly expands in size or if a surgical site becomes increasingly tender, please call for further instruction.
- An on-call physician is available at all times for emergencies; however, we ask that you call during business hours for non-emergent and routine questions.