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NHS Grampian

About your wound
(after orthopaedic surgery)

Information for patients and carers

Department of Orthopaedics
Woodend Hospital

About your wound

After your operation, the surgeon will have closed your wound with metal clips or dissolvable stitches. You will need to have your wound checked 10-14 days after your surgery at your GP practice unless other arrangements have been made by the ward.

You may have some soakage (blood, fluid) on your dressing, especially in the first few days - this is normal.

What causes wound soakage?

Wound soakage varies from person to person. It can depend on:

- type of operation you had
- the nature of your soft tissues (for example, people who are obese can have more soakage from their wounds)
- your physique (build of your body)
- how your wound was closed (with stitches, clips etc)
- type of DVT (deep vein thrombosis) prevention. You might have had injections to thin your blood or compression stockings to help prevent blood clots while you were less mobile after your operation.

Is there anything I should watch out for?

If there is too much soakage, this can be caused by infection. Infection can be superficial (on or near the surface of your skin) or deep.

We need to identify any infection as soon as possible. This will help us treat it successfully and aid your recovery.

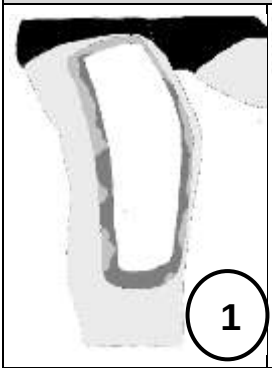
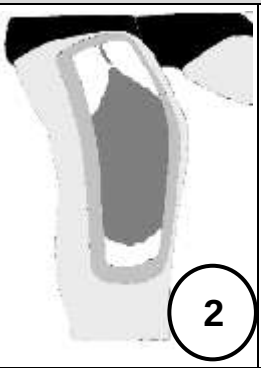
As well as too much soakage, other signs of infection include:

- Fever
  This is the most noticeable sign of infection. If you have a fever you might also feel generally unwell.
- Redness and increasing pain
  Some redness and pain after the surgery is normal. However, any **increasing** redness (spreading outwards) and increasing pain along with wound soakage and fever needs to be investigated.
- Foul smell coming from the dressing.

Things to remember

- Your dressing protects your wound from contamination and infection.
- Keep your dressing in place until your practice nurse has reviewed it (usually 10-14 days after surgery).
- You can shower with the dressing on, **but avoid pouring water directly over the dressing.**

- If your dressing isn't sticking and your wound has been exposed, then your dressing needs changed.
- Your dressing needs changed if it looks like any of the three pictures below (numbered 1, 2 and 3).

You need your dressing changed and your wound checked if your dressing looks like:		
		
Soakage leaking from under dressing.	Dressing very heavily soaked.	Soakage leaking from under dressing.

You <u>don't</u> need your dressing changed if your dressing looks like:	
 4	 5
No soakage visible	Very limited soakage

 6	 7
Some soakage	More soakage but all contained in the dressing

When should I contact my GP practice?

- Contact your GP practice as soon as possible to arrange an appointment with your practice nurse for 10-14 days after your operation. This is to check and, if needed, replace your dressing.
- Please note that your GP practice should **not** normally start antibiotic therapy without consulting your consultant's specialist team.

When should I contact Woodend?

Please contact the Nurse led orthopaedic clinic at Woodend if you have any of the following:

- The dressing is leaking or is completely soaked and it **does** look like one of the three pictures (numbered 1, 2 and 3) on page 4.
- You have increasing pain.
- You have a fever.
- The redness is spreading outwards from the wound.
- There is foul smell from the dressing.

You may be asked to email photos of your wound. The clinic nurse will give you an email address when you call the clinic if this is required.

You may be asked to attend the Nurse Led clinic at Woodend at short notice. If your call is late in the day you may be required to attend the next morning.

Contact details

Nurse-led orthopaedic clinic

Woodend Hospital

☎ 01224 553242

Monday to Thursday, 8:30am to 4:00pm

Friday, 8:30am to 12:30pm

Please call as early in the day as possible.

This leaflet is also available in large print.

Other formats and languages can be supplied on request. Please call Quality Development on 01224 554149 for a copy. Ask for leaflet 1874.

Feedback from the public helped us to develop this leaflet. If you have any comments on how we can improve it, please call 01224 554149 to let us know.

Dept of Orthopaedics
Woodend Hospital
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