

Advice after facial wound repair

Information for patients

This leaflet provides general advice for patients who have undergone facial wound repair. Please note, specific advice will be given to you by the Oral and Maxillofacial Surgical Team which you should follow if it differs from this leaflet. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to the team.

Pain and swelling

- Pain, bruising and swelling are common within the first few days. This can be reduced by sleeping with your head raised.
- Use prescribed or over-the-counter pain relief as advised.

Dressings

- Steri-strips may be placed over the wound. These usually fall off naturally, but can be gently removed after 5 days.
- If skin glue is used it will peel off naturally after 7 days.

Wound care

- Keep the wound clean and dry for the first 48 hours.
- Avoid soaking or excessively wetting the wound during the first week.
- Do not apply make-up over the wound until fully healed.
- Avoid smoking, vaping or drinking alcohol as this increases the risk of infection and impairs wound healing.

Stitch removal and follow-up

- You will be informed whether your stitches need to be removed.
 - Dissolvable stitches will fall out on their own. You can help this by gently cleaning and massaging the area with a warm flannel after 7 days.
 - Non-dissolvable stitches need to be removed after 5 to 7 days to avoid infection and reduce scarring.
- If removal is needed, you can either book through your GP practice nurse or via the Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery team. You will receive an appointment confirmation via text, letter or MyChart (the location for this will be Third floor, Dental Institute, King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, London, SE5 9RS).

Antibiotics

- If antibiotics are prescribed, take as prescribed and complete the full course.
- If a topical ointment is prescribed, apply thinly over the wound or dressing three times a day.

Activity and work

- Avoid excessive lifting and strenuous activities for 7 days.
- Avoid contact sports and swimming for 2 to 3 weeks to limit the risk of further damage or infection.

Scar care

- Begin scar care once the wound has fully healed (normally after 14 days):
 - gently massage the scar daily using a simple moisturiser
 - silicone gel products (for example, Kelo-cote UV or Dermatrix) may help reduce scarring – use as directed
 - protect the scar from sunlight for at least 12 months
 - use sunscreen daily (SPF 30 or higher), even in winter
- Scar healing (maturation) can take up to one year.

When to seek medical attention

- Heavy bleeding that does not stop with direct pressure for 10 minutes
- Re-opening of the wound
- Rapidly increasing swelling and pain
- Leaking pus (discharge)
- Fever or feeling generally unwell

For any queries, please contact the Oral and Maxillofacial Surgical Team on 020 3299 1740 (from Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) or go to your nearest A&E Department.

MyChart

Our MyChart app and website lets you securely access parts of your health record with us, giving you more control over your care. To sign up or for help, call us on 020 3299 4618 or email kings.mychart@nhs.net. Visit www.kch.nhs.uk/mychart to find out more.

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you. They can also pass on praise or thanks to our teams.

Tel: 020 3299 4618

Email: kings.pals@nhs.net

If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact our Interpreting and Accessible Communication Support on 020 3299 4618 or email kings.access@nhs.net