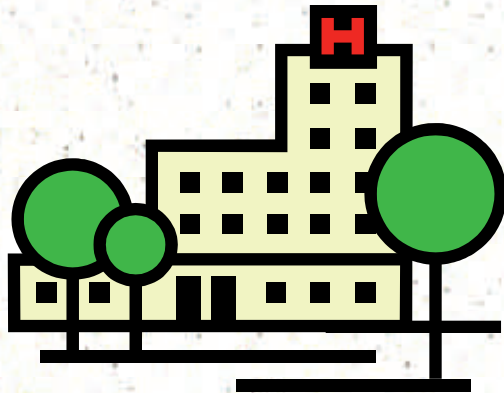


**Call your doctor or go to your local hospital's Emergency Department if:**

- You develop a fever or chills;
- You feel generally unwell (weak or faint);
- You have persistent pain not relieved by medication;
- You see a large amount of drainage on your dressing;
- You are worried about an infection (e.g., fever, yellow or foul smelling drainage, increased redness, swelling, or pain at your incision).



*Your Health. Our Passion – for Life*

## **Care of Your Incision After Day Surgery**

### **Trillium Health Centre**

#### **THC West Toronto**

150 Sherway Drive, Etobicoke, ON  
(416) 259-6671

#### **THC Mississauga**

100 Queensway West, Mississauga, ON  
(905) 848-7100



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*The following are general guidelines. Your surgeon and nurse will provide you with more individualized information.*

## Following Surgery

The first few days after surgery are an important time for healing. Following these steps will help in your recovery and prevent infection.

- Always wash your hands before touching the area where you had surgery.
- Do not remove the initial dressing for at least **2 days**, unless instructed otherwise.
- Report any signs of infection to your doctor (see table 2).

## How to Keep the Incision Clean

- You can use soap and water to gently clean your incision, starting 2 days after surgery (unless instructed otherwise).
- Do not use strong agents (such as rubbing alcohol). These can irritate tissues and may even slow healing.
- After rinsing off soap, pat the area dry. If it is difficult to keep the area clean, cover with a small bandage or dressing, unless you have been instructed to keep this uncovered.

## Methods to Close Incisions

- Depending on your operation, you will either have steri strips, stitches, or staples.

**Table 1**

### 1. Steri Strips (paper tape)



These will fall off on their own after about 10 days. You can peel these off if they are still on.

### 2. Sutures (stitches)



Your nurse will give you instructions if non-absorbable sutures were used. The doctor will remove these in 10-14 days. If absorbable sutures were used, these will gradually disappear in about 2 months.

### 3. Staples (clips)



These are easily removed by your nurse or doctor in 7-10 days.

## For your Comfort

- It is normal to have some discomfort around your incision. This will improve as you heal.
- Take pain medications as ordered, especially before you have any sutures or staples removed, or have a dressing changed.
- Avoid activities that may cause pulling on the area (e.g., vigorous activity or heavy lifting).
- If you have any incisions on your chest or abdomen, you can support (splint) the areas when coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid direct sun exposure; this skin can burn more easily (and sun exposure may worsen scarring)

**Table 2—Reasons to call your doctor**

Call your doctor if your incision has:

- Yellow or green drainage;
- A foul odour;
- Increased bleeding or oozing;
- Redness, swelling or hardening along the incision line;
- The incision feels hot and tender;
- You have a fever and/or chills;
- You have increased pain despite taking pain medications as prescribed.

