**CARING FOR SUTURED WOUNDS**

**Today you have had a skin excision which required sutures (stitches). This wound should be left as is for 48 hours. Remove the band-aid or dressing at the given time and cleanse gently with warm soap and water (Dial soap or another antibacterial soap is best). Apply an antibiotic ointment such as Polysporin and re-cover with a band-aid or other appropriate dressing. Do this twice daily. DO NOT IMMERSE the wound in water for the first 48 hours. Showering or bathing is okay after that time period. For the first week, avoid strenuous exercise and contact sports. If you feel tension on the wound, stop whatever activity is causing it.**

**WHAT TO EXPECT**

1. **PAIN –** Minor tenderness is not uncommon; however, pain that does not go away with Tylenol or Ibuprofen or pain that steadily worsens is abnormal. Call our office if this occurs.
2. **REDNESS –** Healing wounds often have a small ring of redness. This is okay. If the redness expands to more than a few centimeters or if you notice streaks of redness, call our office immediately. This may indicate a wound infection.
3. **DRAINAGE –** A small amount of thin yellow drainage is to be expected. If significant or thick and yellow/green in appearance, this may signal an infection.
4. **BLEEDING** – A small amount of oozing is normal. However, if you notice bleeding through the dressing or if after removing the dressing bleeding does not stop within 15 minutes of holding firm pressure, call our office.
5. **INFECTION –** This is always a possible complication. Signs and symptoms of infection are: increasing pain, swelling, drainage, redness, warmth and fever. If you think you have a wound infection, call our office.
6. **BRUISING –** This is very common, especially around thin skin areas such as the eyelids. This will resolve over a week or so. If you develop bruising that seems to be expanding, please call immediately. Sometimes sutured wounds can bleed under the skin and cause a hematoma or blood clot. This may look like a purplish goose egg under the skin. If this occurs it must be removed, so call our office immediately.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our office at 256-235-3660.