

## **Wound Care After Cervical Herniated Disc Surgery**

When you leave the hospital, you will notice that you do have a Band-Aid on your neck. It is a special surgical bandage that we put on, and we ask that you keep that on for 48 hours after the surgery. Within 48 hours, the skin is already sealed, and it is safe to take that bandage off. I actually think it is a good idea to take the bandage off 48 hours after surgery and go in the shower. You can get the wound wet, no matter what any printed sheet we get tells you, get the wound wet, shower, soap everywhere sort of like washing a car, soap, rinse, pat dry, get all the bacteria of the hospital off your body and then leave the wound open to the air. The wound will not get contaminated. It is going to heal up just fine, but if it is open to the air, it stays nice and dry. After that, you will see the scar, you may see some purple that is actually from the marking pen we used to mark the skin, but the scar does turn red and stays red, maroon color for several months, but within six months by 12 months, it is starting to disappear and a year after surgery, you may have a hard time telling which side had the surgery. The scar actually blends in. We try to put the scar on the incision in the crease of the neck, and if you don't have a crease in your neck, well we try to find where the crease will be, so it is a very innocuous place to have the incision and most people do not even notice it. If you form keloids or you do not heal well, your scar, obviously you are going to have a different type of scar. If you have an infection or some other problem like that, you are going to have a different looking scar. I cannot guarantee the scar is going to be perfect, but most people you know the high 90% have a scar that within a year it is hard to tell which side. A word on infection; it is very very uncommon if you have an infection, you will see some redness around the wound. You need to let us know; we put you on antibiotics. It is very very rare for us to have an infection, but it is something we look for and that certainly could affect how the scar looks.

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