

# Santa Cruz Orthopaedic Institute First Post-op Visit Wound Care Guidelines

## First Post-Op Visit Wound Care Guidelines

Continue to ice and elevate the operative lower extremity whenever possible until the swelling goes down

You may take a shower, but keep the incision covered during the shower with band-aids or saran wrap until the incision is completely healed.

If you have a cast or a cast boot in place or post-operative dressing, place a plastic bag on the extremity and extend it above the knee or elbow and place two rubber bands above the joint. This will help to prevent water from running into the cast.

After you have showered, if cleared by the doctor during the visit, you may remove the cast boot or temporary immobilization device and wash the incision lightly with a washcloth and the hibiclens solution (chlorahexadine) which you obtained preoperatively. If you did not obtain it preoperatively, it is available without a prescription and will help to keep your incision clean.

It is important not to let dirt from your body, bathtub or shower contaminate your incisions for the two weeks after surgery and the two weeks after your staples are removed. **Do not** submerge the incision until it appears to be fully healed.

It is not unusual for sutures to surface during the post-operative wound healing phase. They are designed to absorb slowly in order to avoid an inflammatory reaction. If a knot surfaces 6 weeks post-operatively it is okay to prep it with alcohol and excise it.

Do not scratch the knots or your incision with your fingernails post-operatively as the bacteria from your fingernails will seed the incision and may cause a post-operative infection.

Call the office if there is any gapping in the incision, have a fever of greater than 101.5, ° or if redness, swelling, or discharge of the wound occurs.