WOUND CARE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Keep the initial bandage on your wound or laceration for 24 hours.

2. After 24 hours, remove the bandage, and clean the wound gently 2 to 3 times a day with mild soap and water. Do not use abrasive cleansers, like hydrogen peroxide, alcohol, or iodine.
   - Wash your hands well before cleaning the wound.
   - Apply soap and water with your hands instead of with a washcloth, which may pull on any stitches.
   - Dry the wound gently with sterile gauze. Then dry the surrounding skin with a clean towel.
   - You may apply an antibiotic ointment (such as Polysporin) to the wound with the first day's dressing changes. Afterwards, ointment is not necessary and may make the wound site too wet.
   - Apply sterile gauze or bandages to the wound, being careful not to touch the part of the bandage that will come in contact with the wound.

3. Change any wet dressings as soon as possible.

4. Showering is permitted after 24 hours, but do not immerse the wound in water for a prolonged period of time (as with bathing, swimming, or washing dishes).

5. Keep the wound covered unless you are at home. After the first 24-48 hours you may leave the wound open to the air for short periods of time if you will be at home. Be sure that nothing touches the wound while it is uncovered.

6. Monitor for signs of infection. A small degree of redness at the edge of the wound is normal. If the wound becomes more red, hot, swollen, painful, or drains fluid or pus, call for a same-day appointment to evaluate for possible infection.

7. Keep the wound elevated to decrease pain and swelling.

8. For pain relief, take acetaminophen (Tylenol), ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin), naproxen (Aleve), or the medication prescribed by your healthcare provider. Take ibuprofen or naproxen with food to avoid an upset stomach.

9. Return for follow-up or removal of stitches as directed.

10. Use sunscreen regularly after the skin has healed to prevent sunburn and changes in skin pigmentation.

11. A scar reduction ointment, like over-the-counter Mederma, may be used once the wound has fully healed. However, studies have not proven the effectiveness of this product.