INCISION CARE

Incisions are a necessary part of surgery. These may take 3-6 months to fully heal. There are many parts to the healing process and no guarantee on how a scar will appear once it has fully healed, however the following instructions are important for aiding good outcomes.

**Do not smoke**

You are advised to quit smoking before surgery and to not begin smoking after surgery. Nicotine affects the small blood vessels and can reduce the oxygen in your blood, both are important in the healing process and greatly impact your ability to heal.

**Immediately Following surgery**

You will receive specific instructions for your incisions based on how they were closed following your surgery. These will include when to shower and if ointment is recommended to be applied. For all patients do not get incisions wet for 24 hours after surgery. Do not clean with alcohol or hydrogen peroxide. Use only warm soapy water when bathing. Do not swim in any water including lakes, ocean, swimming pools, hot tubs or other water for 2 weeks following surgery or if you have open areas in any of your incisions.

**Initial healing**

Once your incisions have sealed and any surgical glue has peeled away, you may apply a skin moisturizer to the incision. This will aid in softening the scar and can alleviate itching in the area around the incision. It is recommended to choose products that are fragrance ­free and free of glycolic, retinoid or other possibly irritating ingredients. Examples include: Vaseline products or other ointments, Vitamin E products, Aveeno, BioOil, Mederma, etc.

Avoid any vigorous physical activity for the 2-3 weeks following surgery. Increased physical stress on the incision, including pulling of theskin, can result in separation of the skin edges and a wider or discolored scar. Remember scar tissue is not as strong as your natural tissue and requires time to gain strength.

Two weeks after surgery you can begin using moisturizer or scar cream. To soften the scar gently massage along scar several times a day gradually massaging the deeper as able. Do not massage to the point of discomfort.

**Sunlight Protection**

Following surgery, it is recommended to wear sunscreen with at least an SPF of 30. In the first 12 months after surgery, you should wear sunscreen over the incision at all times. This is due to the sensitivity of new scars to sunlight. New scars exposed to sunlight can become permanently discolored resulting in either lighter or darker skin shade in the area of the incision. Protective clothing including wide brimmed hats are recommended for facial incisions to protect from sunlight’s harmful effects.