



Potential Complications or Side-Effects of Skin Surgery

1. Scar Formation: Scars form whenever there is injury to the skin. Some scars are more noticeable than others. Some individuals are more prone to thickened or keloid scars. Scars in areas of high sebaceous gland concentration and activity such as the nose and forehead are more likely to widen and become depressed.

2. Pain: Post-operative pain will depend on the extent of surgery and also on the particular individual. Pain medications are prescribed which may be taken after surgery if needed. With pain medications, do not drive, operate machinery or make important decisions. Alcohol can amplify the effects of pain medications. It is best to eat something solid before pain medications since they may irritate the stomach and cause nausea.

3. Bleeding: Bleeding after surgery can usually be controlled with pressure applied to the wound for fifteen to twenty minutes and with ice compresses. Some oozing is to be expected. For severe or persistent bleeding, please call 02 26201600.

4. Swelling: Various degrees of swelling will occur. Cold compresses on 20 minutes and off for 10 minutes for the first 24-48 hours will lessen swelling. Elevation of the head at 15-20 degrees while lying down or sleeping will help to reduce edema. A reclining chair usually provides a good angle of head elevation.

5. Bruising: Bruising around the surgery site will resolve. With surgery of the anterior scalp, forehead or around the eyes, a black eye may develop within 12-72 hours after surgery. Sometimes the eye will swell shut.

6. Hematoma: This is a lump that forms under the skin from bleeding after the surgery. It represents a collection of blood.

7. Infection: With any injury to the skin or surgery, infection is possible. An antibiotic ointment will be prescribed at the time of surgery and sometimes antibiotic tablets. Wound infections usually occur four days after the surgery. If you suspect an infection, please call 02 26201600

8. Numbness: It is common to have numbness in the area of surgery because there are always sensory nerves running through the skin. Usually this numbness will go away in six to twelve months. But in some instances, it may be permanent.

9. Paralysis of Nerve: If a cancer extends into the area of a nerve that controls the movement of muscles, temporary or permanent paralysis may occur. The greatest areas of risk on the face are in the temple area where the nerve to the eyebrow and eyelid runs and on the lower cheek where the nerve to the lip runs.

10. Wound Dehiscence: In straightforward terms, this means the wound separates or pulls apart. This can happen anywhere but it is most prone to occur when the wound overlies an area of muscle mass such as on the back or extremities. If a body movement seems to tug on the wound, stop the movement and relax.

11. Wound Healing: Not all skin wounds heal ideally. At times a skin repair, graft or flap may fail to heal well or the wound may seem to lift up or protrude. This may affect part of the wound or the whole wound. Most often the wound will still heal adequately with treatment. Sometimes additional surgery is required.