

Patient Education

Surgical Specialties Center



Use an ointment dressing to help heal your wound and reduce scarring.

Using an Ointment Dressing

About Your Ointment Dressing

- An ointment dressing will help keep your wound clean and allow it to heal without getting a scab.
- An ointment dressing is clean, but it is not sterile.
- It is OK to shower (with the dressing off). Let the warm water wash over your wound.
- Do **not** use soap in your wound. It is OK to use soap on your skin around your wound.

How to Apply Your Dressing

- When you are done showering, pat your wound dry with a clean towel or gauze.
- Wash your hands with soap and water and then apply the prescribed ointment with your finger. Apply a generous amount to keep the wound moist.
- Cover the area with dry gauze.
- Use the tape that you were given to keep the dressing in place.

Kinds of Ointment

- **Bacitracin:** This ointment is clear and does not change color. It does not need to be washed off. It will absorb into the dressing.
- **Polysporin:** This ointment is clear and does not change color. It does not need to be washed off. It will absorb into the dressing.
- **Silvadine:** This ointment is white when you put it on and changes to a yellow-green color when it is exposed to the air. This is normal. Apply plenty of Silvadine to your wound, like you are frosting a cake. **Wash Silvadine off your wound when it is time to change your dressing.** Allow the shower to rinse it off. You can use a washcloth or gauze to help remove it.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call if you have questions or concerns.

When to Change Your Dressing

Bacitracin or Polysporin

- Change your dressing 2 times a day – once in the morning and again in the evening. Use an ointment dressing for 1 week.
- If your wound has not fully healed after 1 week, keep using an ointment dressing until it is fully healed.
- If you see scabs forming after you stop using the ointment dressing, start using it again.

Silvadine

- Change your dressing 2 times a day – once in the morning and again in the evening.
- Silvadine is usually used for a longer time than other ointments. Follow your doctor's instructions on how long to use Silvadine.

Call Your Nurse or Doctor if You:

- Have redness in the area where you are using the ointment.
- Have been using Bacitracin or Polysporin ointment dressing for 2 weeks and your wound has not healed.
- Have questions or concerns that cannot wait until your next appointment.

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Published: 12/1998, 03/2012

Clinician Review: 12/1998

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