

Vulvar Care Following Your Vulvectomy

You have had a vulvectomy, surgery to remove part or all of the vulva. Here is information about taking care of your surgery cut (incision) after you go home.

What can I expect after my vulvectomy?

After your procedure, it is common to have:

- Pain or discomfort
- Some fluid or blood coming from the incision
- Numbness
- Some redness and swelling

How should I take care of my incision?

After urinating or having a bowel movement, do the following to clean and dry the area of your incision:

- Use a moistened wipe, making sure to wipe front-to-back.
- Use a small squirt bottle with lukewarm water to rinse the area. You can also use a handheld shower if you have access to one.
- Use a clean, soft towel to pat dry the area.
- Use a blow dryer on a cool setting to dry the incision.

You may shower or take a tub bath following surgery. Use clear, warm water, and do not soak for more than 10 minutes. Do not use bubble bath or bath oil.

After bathing, use a clean, soft towel to pat dry the area. Then use a blow dryer on a cool setting to dry the incision.

Avoid wearing tight-fitting clothing over your incision.

You may use an ice pack on your vulva for up to 10 minutes at a time to help with swelling. Avoid placing the ice directly on your skin.

Your incision may be closed with dissolvable stitches. As they begin to dissolve, you may notice a yellow or white discharge, this is normal.

Look at the incision area with a mirror every day to check for signs of infection.

When should I call for help?

Tell your care team right away if you notice:

- More redness, swelling, or pain
- More fluid or blood coming from the incision
- Warmth around the incision
- Pus or a bad smell

Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. – Call your cancer care team or message them using MyChart.

After hours, weekends, and holidays – Call the hospital operator at 801-587-7000 and ask for the surgical gynecology resident on call.

If you have chest pain, trouble breathing, or other emergency concerns, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.