

## **Dressing & Incision Care**

Most incisions are closed with absorbable material that will “dissolve” on its own; hence, there are no stitches that need to be taken out.

We occasionally use staples if the skin is not well perfused or the current surgery is performed through a previous incision. However, staples are never used for anterior cervical surgery (where the incision is in front of the neck).



1.

- The outer most part of your dressing (which is immediately visible to you) is water proof
  - You may get this wet and take a shower as early as the day of surgery
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2.

- Under the clear tape (outermost dressing) is a piece of gauze
- Remove the clear tape and gauze 48-60 hours after your surgery



3.

- Under the gauze, you will find small piece(s) of water proof tape (Steri-strips) which is placed on top of the incision
- You may leave the Steri-strips open to air and do NOT need to cover them with another dressing (sometimes there is slight drainage for a few days after surgery...if this is the case, please cover the Steri-strips with dry gauze and tape)
- You may get these Steri-strips wet when you shower and do not need to cover them
- Gently dry the Steri-strips with a towel after you shower
- They will fall start to curl up and fall off on their own in 7-14 days

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4.

- Under the Steri-strip is the surgical incision
- By the time the Steri-strip falls off (in 7-14 days), the incision should have healed (the above picture is a fresh incision prior to the application of the surgical dressing)
- You may start massaging the incision after it has completely healed (generally after 14-18 days)