Incisions and Wound Care

During the weeks following your surgery, we want to make sure you know what to expect throughout each step of your recovery. We want you to be informed and supported in this process, which is why we have compiled these videos for your reference. As members of your care team, please know that we are here for you to answer any additional questions you may have.

- Incisions: locations sternotomy, thoracotomy (R anterior, R lateral, under breast), L groin, EVH harvest site

- Dermabond covering to protect, do not peel or pick.

- Do not touch incision with unwashed/clean hands

- Ok to shower only with soap and clean water. Prefer antibacterial soap. Clean water, new clean washcloth.

- Don’t scrub hard. Pat dry. No creams lotions or powders. No antibacterial cream needed for first 2 weeks.

- Keep site clean and dry as possible. If area is draining or staying moist, use clean gauze every day, sometimes even a maxipad or absorbent gauze can help.

- If you cannot see your incision sites in groin or be able to properly clean area, please let our staff know before discharge or as soon as possible and we can set up home health to come and assist with wound care.

- Women- wear supportive surgical bra or wireless bra to take tension off incision

- Chest Tube sites:
  - Sutures- leave, we will remove in 2 weeks at clinic
  - If drainage, normal, use clean gauze

- No baths, swimming pools, hot tubs, open water- wait until incision is completely healed and scab/scar is gone- can take up to 4-6 weeks.

When to call and be concerned:

- excessive drainage (soaking through gauze every 4 hours,)
- purulent, thick, milky fluid
- site is tender, hot, red around surrounding tissue
- fever/chills

If you have any questions or concerns, we are here for you. You can contact our office by calling: 713-486-5100 or send us an email at: info.ctvs@uth.tmc.edu