

Advice for care of wounds

Wounds are treated in different ways depending on the type of wound and where it is on the body. Usually a wound is closed with either **sutures** ('stitches'), **tissue adhesive** ('glue'), or **Steristrips®/Leucostrips®** ('butterfly stitches'). Sometimes we may use staples or hair ties on scalp wounds. Often we do not need to close a wound because it will heal by itself. Some wounds should not be closed because of the risk of infection, for instance most bites.

General care of all wounds

- Keep the wound dry
- Do not cover with airtight/waterproof plasters, finger stalls or bags
- Rest and elevate the area to prevent swelling/pain
- Do not stretch or strain the wound as this may re-open it and make the scar bigger
- If you develop any of the following problems, seek medical advice:
 - Increased redness around the wound
 - Worsening pain or swelling
 - Discharge from the wound
 - Shivering and fever

Sutures/staples

These are normally removed after 5-14 days depending on the type of sutures and where they have been put (see advice below). You should make an appointment to have them removed by the practice nurse at your GP surgery unless you have been told otherwise.

If the wound was closed with dissolving (absorbable) sutures, they do not need to be removed. You should be careful not to catch them on anything (such as a comb or hairbrush) until the knot falls out on its own after about 10-20 days.

Site of sutures: _____ Type of suture material: _____

Number of sutures: _____

Tissue adhesive

Keep the wound clean and dry for 5 days, although the glue can withstand splashes after 24 hours. **Do not rub, scratch or pick the wound** because if the glue loosens, it may open again. This will leave a bigger scar.

Steristrips®/Leucostrrips®/“butterfly stitches”

You can remove these adhesive strips yourself after a few days (see advice below). This is easier if they have been soaked for about 10 minutes, for example in the bath. The practice nurse at your GP surgery can remove them for you if you are not happy to do it yourself.

You need to make the following appointments:

- Wound check: ____days with your practice nurse / in ED review clinic [delete]
- Suture/staple/strip removal :____days by your practice nurse (or yourself for adhesive strips)

Will I have a scar?

All wounds that go through the full thickness of the skin leave a scar, but they are more obvious on some areas of the body. We cannot stop you developing a scar, but we will try to make it as small as possible by closing the wound wherever we can. If you are not happy with the scar when it has fully healed, please see your GP.

For more information contact:

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| • Emergency Department 01535 294481 | • Your GP |
| • The NHS website www.nhs.uk | • NHS 111 |

By telephoning, we can ensure you get appropriate advice and do not wait unnecessarily in the Emergency Department.

Are you a victim of Domestic Violence? For confidential advice, contact:

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| Bradford | 0808 2800 999 | https://www.stayingput.uk.net/contact |
| North Yorkshire | 03000 110 110 | https://www.idas.org.uk/ |
| Lancashire | 0300 323 0085 | https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/your-health-and-wellbeing/domestic-abuse/ |

If you require this leaflet in other languages or formats please telephone the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01535 294019

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