

How to care for a wound closed with stitches or staples after an injury

Emergency Department

Information for Patients

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Introduction

Stitches or staples have been used to close your wound. Your wound needed this treatment as it was a deep or long wound. Most wounds are stitched but staples may have been used in some cases.

Will my stitches/ staples need removing?

Some stitches dissolve by themselves and do not need to be taken out; you will have been told if this is the case. If you have stitches that need to be removed or have staples, you will need to arrange for removal as noted in the table below. Please contact your GP surgery to arrange removal.

Number of stitches/staples	Inserted on	When to remove
		Remove in days

Will I need a tetanus jab?

Tetanus is a serious but rare condition. The bacteria that can cause tetanus can enter your body through a wound or cut in your skin. You may be given a tetanus booster if your tetanus vaccinations aren't up-to-date and if your wound is high risk (e.g. farming incident, animal bite, old burn, or very dirty).

Anti-tetanus cover up-to-date?	Anti-tetanus booster given if needed?	Patient unsure about anti-tetanus vaccination status - please check

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To give feedback about this information sheet, contact InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

What advice do I need to follow to care for my wound?

- It is best to keep the wounded area raised for at least the next 2 days to reduce swelling and improve healing. You may have been given a sling to help with this.
- Try to keep your wound clean and dry for 2 days; after this time you may have a shower and wash the wound gently with soap and water. Pat the wound dry afterwards. It is important that you do not have a bath or swim until the stitches/ staples have been removed, as this can increase the risk of an infection.
- Avoid activities that could hurt the wound area until your stitches/ staples have been removed. This is to prevent the stitches/ staples from breaking and the cut from opening up again.
- If you have a dressing on your wound, please keep this dry. If it becomes wet, remove it and replace with a dry dressing. Spare dressings are available from your local pharmacy.
- Itching is common during healing. Moisturiser such as E45 may help; apply this after the wound is dry, a minimum of 72 hours later.
- You should protect your scar from the sun with sunscreen or by wearing clothing or a hat that covers the scar for the next 12 months.

What do I need to look out for?

Please look out for signs of infection of your wound; these include:

- excessive pain - some pain is normal, but if it gets worse seek help
- swelling
- redness
- pus
- heat around the site
- fever

If you have any of these symptoms or if you injure the area again, contact your GP straight away or attend your local Emergency Department.

Contact details

Minor Injuries Unit, Emergency Department: Switchboard 0300 303 1573, extension 0052 or 0054.

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل

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ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

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