

Advice about wound care

Information for patients



One or more of the following methods has been chosen to treat you, depending on the type of wound you have.

Stitches (sutures)

The length of time your stitches need to stay in place depends on where the wound is on your body.

Do not attempt to remove the stitches yourself.

Before you leave the emergency department, the doctor/nurse will tell you when the stitches need to be removed.

You will need to make an appointment with the practice nurse at your doctor's surgery for:

..... stitches to be removed in days' time.

Steristrips

Steristrips are sticky dressings which hold the edges of the wound together. You can remove the steristrips yourself in 5 - 7 days.

Moistening the wound and steristrips with warm water will make this easier to do.

Medical glue

Medical glue does not need to be removed. The glue will form part of the scab and fall off in about 10 days when the wound is healed.

Medical staples

Before you leave the emergency department, the doctor/nurse will tell you when the staples need to be removed. You will need to make an appointment with the practice nurse at your doctor's surgery for:

..... staples to be removed in days' time.

We have given you a staple remover. Please take this with you when you go to your doctor's surgery to have the staples removed.

Do not attempt to remove the staples yourself.

How to care for your wound

If you have had your wound closed using stitches, steristrips or medical glue, you must keep the wound dressing clean and dry. If it does become dirty or wet within the first 48 hours please see the nurse at your GP surgery for a new dressing.

Avoid showering or bathing the affected area for 5 days. This will allow the wound to start to heal well. Do not cover the dressing or wound with anything waterproof unless we tell you otherwise, as this may make the wound soggy and increase the chance of infection.

If you have had your wound closed using staples, you can wash the stapled wound and surrounding area with water. Take special care to dry around the staples, gently but thoroughly.

For all wounds

Once the wound closure method has been removed, gently massage the area with moisturising cream three times a day for a month, to encourage good wound healing. Always protect the scar with factor 50 sunblock on sunny days. If, at any time, you have concerns about the wound please contact the practice nurse at your GP's surgery or return to the Emergency Department. This includes if the wound 'comes apart' at any time; there are signs of infection (as below); or you are concerned about whether it is healing correctly.

Most wounds should heal within 2-3 weeks, but may take a few more weeks before they settle completely. Some wounds may require re-dressing by your practice nurse; the suggested time for this is at the back of this leaflet.

Signs of infection

Please contact your own doctor if your wound develops any of the following symptoms:

- redness
- swelling
- heat around wound
- an increase in pain
- any discharge.

Tetanus

We will only give you a tetanus injection if you have not already had a course of five injections during your lifetime, or if you have the type of wound that is particularly likely to be infected by tetanus.

Tetanus given: Yes No Date

Anti-tetanus immunoglobulin given: Yes No Date

Foreign body present: Yes No

Antibiotics given and details: Yes No Date

Type of dressing applied:

Date dressing to be changed:

How to contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact:

Emergency Department

John Radcliffe Hospital Tel: **01865 220 224**

Emergency Department

Horton General Hospital Tel: **01295 229 412**

Alternatively you can contact your GP or NHS 111 (Freephone), for emergency advice.

If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter, a document in Easy Read, another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221 473** or email **PALSJR@ouh.nhs.uk**

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www.ouh.nhs.uk/patient-guide/leaflets/library.aspx

