

Wound Care – Sutures (Stitches)

Your wound was closed with sutures (stitches) to speed healing, reduce the chance of infection, and reduce scarring. The wound pain decreases after 24 to 48 hours. If you have not had a tetanus booster in the past 5 to 10 years, you may need a tetanus shot.



When to Get Help

Go to the nearest Emergency Department or Urgent Care Centre if you experience:

- Numbness or severe swelling and cannot move the joint below the wound.
- Bleeding continues despite pressure.
- Red streaks coming from the injured site.
- Increased temperature, fever or flu-like symptoms.
- Pus (green or yellow fluid) draining from the wound.

To Learn More:

- Ask your health care provider.
- Go to HealthLinkBC - call 8-1-1 (7-1-1 for deaf or hard of hearing) or go online to www.HealthLinkBC.ca

Recommended Follow-Up

Follow up in __ days.

Name of Provider

Reason

Date/Time

Location

Contact Info



How to Care for Yourself at Home

- Keep the wound clean and dry for 2-3 days.
- For arms or leg wounds, elevate the affected limb as much as possible for the first 24 hours to reduce pain and swelling.
- After 24 hours you may change the bandage. If the bandage is stuck to the wound, use warm water to soak it off.
- Gently clean around the wound with warm water and soap and dress it as recommended by your doctor.
- Do not pull on the ends of the sutures.
- For a mouth or lip wound, rinse your mouth after meals with warm salted water (a teaspoon of salt in a glass of water).

The information in this document is intended solely for the person to whom it was given by the health care team. This information does not replace the advice given to you by your health care provider.

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Wound Care - Sutures (Stitches) Discharge Instructions - continued

- If you have a wound on your head, you may wash your hair gently after you get home.
- If the wound bleeds, apply gentle direct pressure for 10-15 min.

NON-ABSORBABLE SUTURES

- You have had a wound repaired with non-absorbable sutures.
- Make an appointment with your primary care provider to have your sutures removed in ___ days.

ABSORBABLE SUTURES

- You have had a wound repaired with absorbable sutures. These generally do not need to be removed by your primary care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner). As your wound heals over the next 7 to 10 days, the sutures begin to fall off at about this time.
- At 7 to 10 days if your stitches are loose, you can remove them by wiping with a clean gauze pad or cotton ball. DO NOT pull your stitches out – they should wipe away easily.
- Have your family doctor take them out if they are still in place after 10 days.

Notes:

Additional Information

Tell Us What You Think!

Have feedback about this document? Use the form at: bit.ly/pdsfeedback



Find this information sheet on the ECBC website:

https://emergencycarebc.ca/clinical_resource/patient-information-sheet/wound-care-sutures/

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