

SUTURED WOUND CARE

Your child received _____ stitches. Your child's wound will need to be cared for at home. Keeping the wound clean even after it is healed will affect the way the scar looks. Please follow these steps to reduce scarring: Follow **only** the directions checked below:

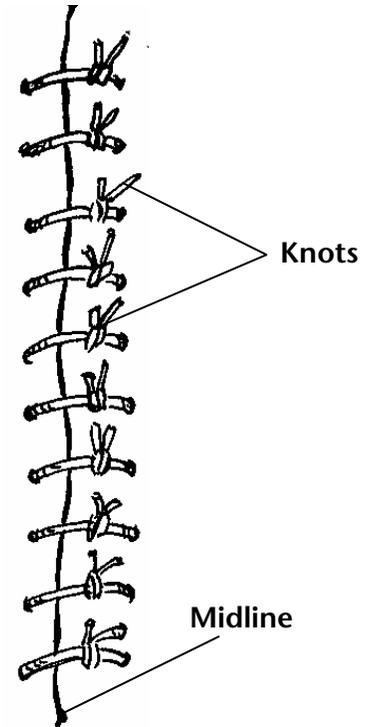
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Suture (Stitches) Removal and Follow-Up

- The stitches will not need to be removed. They will break down and come out or dissolve by themselves. This will take about ____ days or ____ weeks.
- The stitches should be removed in _____ days. Call your child's doctor for an appointment to have the stitches removed.
- Your child's wound should be checked in ____ day(s) at _____ for _____.

Bandages

- No bandage is needed.
- Keep the bandage on until the doctor removes it.
- Keep the bandage on for 24 hours before you remove it to clean the wound. After cleaning, place a clean bandage over the wound.
- Change the bandage if it gets wet or dirty.
- Keep the skin adhesive strips on until they fall off on their own. You may trim the edges if they curl up from the skin. If the area gets wet, blot it dry with a soft towel. Do not rub.



Picture 1 The sutured wound. Clean in a direction that keeps the knots away from the mid-line of the wound.

WOUND AND SKIN CLEANING

Cleaning the wound should be done every day. The cleanings help to remove crusts, reduce scarring, and make it easier for the stitches to be removed or to dissolve. Follow only the instructions checked:

- Skin adhesive strips are in place. Do not get the area wet. Do not clean the wound.
- Do not** disturb or clean the wound until instructed to do so by your doctor.
- Do not** get the wound wet at all.
- Do not** place the wound in bath water. Showers are allowed after _____ days.
- Wash your child's hair today, and then not for _____ days.
- Starting 24 hours after the injury, clean the wound _____ times per day for _____ days.
- An antibiotic ointment may be applied _____ times per day with each dressing change.

HOW TO CLEAN THE WOUND AND SKIN

- Clean the wound with a solution of half hydrogen peroxide and half water.
- Use a cotton swab dipped in the peroxide mixture. Gently clean both sides of the wound. Then clean in between the stitches.
- All the knots will be lined up on one side of the wound. Clean in the direction that keeps the knots off the middle line of the wound.
- Sometimes when you clean a wound, a knot in the stitches may come loose. If one or two knots come untied, don't worry. Just clean the wound gently. If the wound opens, call your child's doctor or go to the Emergency Department or Urgent Care as soon as possible.

SIGNS OF INFECTION

Watch for these signs of infection:

- Increasing redness around the wound
- Increasing pain or tenderness
- Yellow or green discharge or drainage from the wound
- Increased swelling
- Foul odor from the wound
- Fever
- Red streaks that start at the wound and travel up towards the body

There is a chance that the wound may get infected. If you think the wound is infected, call your child's doctor or return to the Emergency Department or Urgent Care.

ACTIVITY

- Your child may go back to school or child care. Please tell your child's teacher about any restricted activity.
- Until the stitches are removed, your child should avoid contact sports, bike riding, swimming, tree climbing, skating and skateboarding, physical education class and other rough play.

WHEN TO CALL THE DOCTOR

- Call your child's doctor or return to the Emergency Department or Urgent Care if there are any signs of infection.
- Call your child's doctor to arrange a follow-up appointment if needed.

OTHER ADVICE

Many things affect how a wound heals. Your child's overall health, proper cleansing, proper nutrition, direction of the wound, exposure to UV rays and susceptibility to thick scarring can affect the look of your child's healed wound. The final scar may not settle for a few years after the injury.

- After the stitches are removed or have dissolved, you may apply lotions to the healed skin. You may use lotions such as aloe vera, shea butter, cocoa butter, vitamin E oil or over-the-counter scar-reducing creams.
- It is important to apply **sunscreen** often to the healed wound for up to 2 years. Use a sunblock lotion with an SPF of 15 or higher.
- For healed wounds on the head, a **hat** should be worn to protect the area from the sun and UV rays.