

# Wound care

## How to care for your wound following treatment

- Caring for your wound is important to help it heal, avoid infection and minimize scarring.
- Wounds heal more quickly when the edges of the wound are held together.
- All wounds and dressings should be kept clean and dry - wash around it where possible.
- If your dressing does become dirty or wet in the first 48 hours, please see your Practice Nurse at your GP Surgery for a new dressing.
- Do not cover the dressing with anything waterproof protection like plastic bags etc unless advised, for long periods of time as this will make the wound soggy and cause problems with the healing process.
- Depending on the type of wound you have, one of the following methods has been chosen to treat you.

## Stitches (sutures) or Medical Staples

- Keep the area around the wound clean and dry for the first 48 hours.
- After this you can shower and gently pat the wound dry with a clean towel.
- The length of time your stiches or staples need to stay in depends on where the wound is on your body.
- Before you leave the Minor Injury Unit, the nurse will tell you when the stiches or staples need to be removed.
- The stiches or staples will usually be removed by your practice nurse at your GP Surgery. You are responsible for making the necessary appointment.
- Do not attempt to remove the stiches or staples yourself.

Number of stiches/staples to remove: \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ days.

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## Steristrips (butterflies)

- Steristrips are sticky dressings which hold the edges of the wound together to allow it to heal.
- They should be left on for 5-7 days. Occasionally longer, especially if used with glue.
- Keep the area clean and dry as much as you can or the dressing may peel off before the wound is healed.
- After 5-7 days the dressing will usually peel off by itself.
- If not, moisten them with luke warm soap and water and carefully peel away.
- This can be done by yourself or by making an appointment with your Practice Nurse at your GP Surgery.

## Tissue Adhesive (glue)

- Tissue adhesive holds the wound edges together and does not need to be removed.
- Keep the area clean and dry for 5 days.
- The glue will form part of the scab and fall off naturally in about 5-10 days when the wound is healed.
- Do not pick or scratch at the glued area as this will cause the wound to open.
- Take care, if used on Scalp wound, combing your hair.

## Dressing

Type of Dressing:

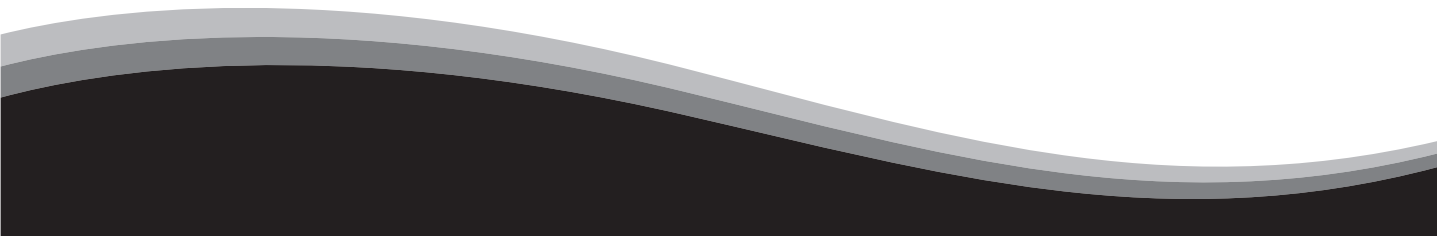
Date dressing to be changed:

Please make an appointment with your Practice Nurse at your GP Surgery for your first intention dressing and wound check in \_\_\_\_\_ days.

## If you have a wound on your hand or fingers

- Dressings applied to hands and fingers should be kept dry and undisturbed.
- Avoid using waterproof protection (eg rubber gloves) unless advised, as this may make the wound damp and increase the risk of infection.

## Healing/Scarring

- 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 your scar with sunblock on sunny days.
  - Most wounds should take 2-3 weeks to heal, but may take a few more weeks before they settle completely.
  - Scars may remain red for 6 months or more.
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## When to seek advice

Any type of wound can become infected. Signs of infection include:

- Increased redness or swelling around the wound.
- Pus like discharge from the wound.
- Heat around the wound.
- Increased pain or tenderness.
- Fever.
- Feeling unwell.

If you are concerned that your wound has become infected or it appears that the wound has come apart at any time, please attend the Minor Injury Unit, Accident and Emergency Unit or your GP Surgery for a review.

**Please contact your GP or NHS111 for any queries or concerns.**

If you would like this information in another format or language, please contact the Your Experience Team on freephone 0800 694 5530. Alternatively you can email [wcnt.yourexp@nhs.net](mailto:wcnt.yourexp@nhs.net)

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