

Looking after your child's surgical wound

Children's Hospital

Information for Patients

Last reviewed: July 2024

Next review: July 2027

Leaflet number: 355 Version: 3

Introduction

There are different types of wounds and they can be closed using different materials. The type of aftercare your child needs will depend on the way their wound is closed.

How will the wound be closed?

- **Stitches (sutures)** - these may be made of dissolvable material and will be absorbed in time by the body. You might still see the ends of the dissolvable stitches on the skin; these will fall off in time or will be snipped by a nurse when the wound is checked.

Some stitches are not dissolvable and will need to be taken out. This is usually between 7 to 10 days after surgery. We will talk to you about this before your child goes home so that you know what arrangements need to be made.

- **Steristrips** - these are sometimes also known as paper stitches. They either fall off or are taken off after 7 to 10 days. To remove them, you can dampen the strips and carefully pull off.
- **Skin glue** - this is a medical glue that will drop off by itself when the wound has healed.
- Sometimes the wound is left open to heal on its own. This may be for a number of reasons and we will explain why at the time.

How should I look after the wound?

Do:

- Keep the wound clean and dry for at least 5 days

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or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

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

- Leave any dressings on for 5 days unless a nurse or doctor tells you otherwise. We can give you clean dressings if needed.

Do not:

- Cover the wound with anything waterproof unless your doctor or nurse tells you to. This can sometimes make the wound soggy and prone to infection.
- Pick scabs that form on the wound.

What do I need to look out for?

- If the wound becomes sore, red, painful or swollen.
- If there is any fluid coming from the wound. This may be blood, clear straw coloured fluid or thick yellow smelly fluid (pus).
- If the wound reopens.

Who to contact if these symptoms develop

- Ward 19 (24 hours) for orthopaedic patients 0116 258 5244.
- Ward 10 for surgical patients 0116 258 5362.
- Your family doctor (GP) or practice nurse.
- Community nurse if you have been discharged into the care of the community nurse for dressing changes. We will give you a telephone number before your child goes home.
- Specialist nurses for Orthopaedic patients only 07950 888 466 / 07977 957 466

Please remember...

- It may take up to 6 months or more for the redness of the scar to fade.
- When in the sun, always apply sunblock over the healing area to protect it and reduce scarring.

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