



Wound care advice

Information for patients from the Emergency Department

Please speak to a healthcare professional before following the advice below

Your wound may have been treated by suturing (stitches), wound closure strips, or medical glue (designed to treat wounds). The method we used will depend on the type of wound you have.

Why have I been given an anaesthetic?

You may have been given a local anaesthetic to numb your wounded area, which will minimise the pain of the procedure. The area injected with anaesthetic may stay numb for up to two hours, but start to hurt again as it wears off. If this happens you can take a simple painkiller, such as paracetamol.

Do I need to keep my wound dry?

Yes, keep your wound dry where possible.

Do not cover with a waterproof finger dressing protector (such as a finger stool) **or plastic bag**, unless you are told to, as this will make your wound soggy and more likely to become infected.

If the sutures are to your scalp, you may wash your hair today and dry your hair with a hairdryer, and then leave it until the sutures are removed. Be careful when brushing / combing your hair.

Will I need my stitches / sutures / glue removed by my GP?

- Your **stitches** may be removed by your GP practice nurse in _____ days.
- The **strips** may be removed in _____ days. You can do this by gently peeling them from each end, towards the centre of your wound.
- **Medical glue** does not need to be removed, the glue drops off by itself when the wound has healed.
- You may also have **staples** to close your wound. While Urgent Treatment Centres do not close wounds with staples, they are able to remove them.

You are responsible for making the appointment with your GP practice nurse to have your sutures removed or have your wound reviewed. Please tell your GP surgery that you need follow-up care as soon as possible, so they can make an appointment for you.

How should I care for my wound if medical glue has been used?

- Keep your wound clean and dry for five days.
- If a dressing has been placed over your wound, leave it in place for five days.
- If you are worried about your wound, tell your GP.
- A scab will form on your wound, which will come away once you start washing the area. **Do not pick at the scab.**

What if I have had an animal or human bite?

All surface bites and scratches will be cleaned thoroughly. A deep wound caused by a dog's tooth might not be stitched due to the risk of infection.

Patients who have suffered a human bite may need to have a blood sample taken. A full course of antibiotics may also be prescribed for bites, human and animal.

Why have you put my arm in a sling?

If your injury affects your arm, you may need to wear a high arm sling to help stop further swelling and reduce any pain.

Will I need antibiotics or a tetanus injection?

If your doctor feels it necessary, you will be prescribed a full course of antibiotics. You may also be given a tetanus injection, depending on when you last had one.

How long will the scar be red for?

The redness of your scar may take six months or more to fade.

What if I have any concerns?

There is a small chance your wound will re-open. Do not worry, come back and we will look at your injury again.

See your GP practice nurse if:

- the strips peel off before the specified time, leaving a gaping wound.
- the area becomes red, swollen, increasingly painful, or discharge appears.
- you develop a fever or unusual tiredness.

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients.

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 783145 (tel://+441227783145), or email ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net (ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net)

Patients should not bring large sums of money or valuables into hospital. Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property has been handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals website (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/information-for-patients/patient-information/>).

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