

## **PATIENT INFORMATION – WOUND CARE**

You would have had one of the following treatments today, depending on your wound:

### **Stitches**

#### **Things to do:**

- keep them clean and dry

This will reduce your risk of developing an infection.

#### **Things not to do:**

- Do not scratch your stitches in case you damage them
- Do not play sport so you allow the wound to heal
- Do not swim until the wound has healed and the stitches have been removed
- Do not let children play with water, mud, sand and paint as these could cause the wound area to get dirty or sore or cause an infection

It may be advisable for children to avoid PE at school until their wound has healed.

### **When do I get the stitches removed?**

You would have been told if you need to return to your GP or a nurse to have your stitches removed. Stitches are usually removed in 5 – 10 days depending on where on the body they are.

Some stitches are made of dissolvable (absorbable) material and will disappear on their own. This can take 1 – 2 weeks.

## **Steristrips (butterfly stitches)**

These are narrow adhesive strips. A protective dressing is not usually needed but you must keep the wound dry until the strips are removed.

### **When will I get the strips removed?**

These are normally removed in 5-7 days, or sometimes up to 14 days for cuts to the shinbone. You should have been advised if you can remove them at home or if you need to go into your surgery to get them removed.

## **Glue**

A special glue for skin that will come off by itself is often used when the wound is healing.

### **Things to do:**

- keep your wound dry for at least five days , then you can wash the wound, but don't soak it in water for a long time as it could make the glue come off, or reopen the wound
- if the wound is on your head, you can wash your hair after five days

### **Looking after your wound with glue**

Below are some other ways you can help your wound to heal.

- Do pat your wound to dry it gently with a soft towel - don't rub it.
- Don't stick a plaster on top of the skin glue as this could pull the glue off.
- Don't put creams or lotions on your wound as they could make the skin glue come off too soon.
- Don't try to remove the skin glue or scratch and pick at your wound - it will come off by itself after about 7-10 days.
- Don't scratch, pick or mess with your wound - the scab will come off once your wound has healed.

Most wounds closed with skin glue heal normally. You probably won't need to see your doctor or nurse again, unless complications develop, such as if your wound splits open again or starts to bleed.

## WOUND CARE CONT

For all wounds you should:

- Keep the area clean and dry.
- Try not to scratch the wound
- Try to cover your stitches as best you can when you have a bath or shower. If your stitches accidentally get wet, dry the area with a clean towel.
- Avoid wearing tight clothing that could rub against your wound.

If any fluid comes from the wound or in the unlikely event that the wound re-opens, contact your GP or go to your local Accident and Emergency Department.

You should also look out for signs of infection such as if:

- the wound becomes more red or swollen or feels warm
- the pain or soreness in your wound gets worse
- a discharge or pus weeps from your wound or there is an unpleasant smell
- you have a high temperature/fever

If you have any of the above symptoms, speak to your GP or call NHS Direct Wales on 0845 46 47 for advice.

Your wound today was treated with:

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### **Further Advice/Instructions**

*Please use this section to give the patient specific information e.g. follow up appointments or after care advice.*

You should be seen in the Accident and Emergency Department in \_\_\_\_\_ days

You should make an appointment to see your GP in \_\_\_\_\_ days

This information has been produced based on previous information leaflets and the evidence available at the time of publication. It has been clinically reviewed however if you notice anything that needs updating or amending please contact [ppi.team@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:ppi.team@wales.nhs.uk)

If you require this information in another language or format please ask a member of staff.

For further advice or information contact NHS Direct Wales 0845 46 47  
[www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk)