

## Wound care advice

### Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio CD, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please contact the PALS desk on 01271 314090 or at [rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net](mailto:rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net).

### Stitches (Sutures)

The length of time the stitches will need to stay in place will depend on where the wound is on the body. You will be informed when your stitches need to be removed. You will need to book an appointment with the practice nurse at your GP to have these removed.

DO NOT attempt to remove the stitches yourself.

### Steristrips

Steristrips are sticky tape like dressings that hold the edges of a wound together. These can simply be removed by yourself or by your GP practice nurse after 5-7 days. To remove Steristrips, moisten the wound with warm water and gently peel off.

### Medical glue

Medical glue is specially formulated to close wounds and does not have to be removed. The glue will form part of the scab and fall off in about 10 days when the wound is healed.

### Medical staples

The length of time the staples will need to stay in place will depend on where the wound is on the body. Before you leave the department, you will be informed when your staples need to be removed and will be provided with a staple remover. You will need to book an appointment with the practice nurse at your GP to have these removed. Please take the staple remover with you to have the staples removed.

DO NOT attempt to remove the staples yourself.

### Caring for your wound

If you have your wound closed with stitches, Steristrips or staples, it is important to keep the wound and dressing clean and dry. Be careful not to scratch your wound. Avoid bathing or showering the affected area for 5 days to allow the wound to start to heal. Getting Steristrips wet may cause your wound to re-open.

If you have your wound closed with medical glue, you should not get your wound wet for at least one hour after the glue is applied. Following that period it is ok to wash your wound.

For head wounds which have been closed with medical glue, you may wash your hair when you get home as long as this is at least one hour after the glue is applied. Pat/dab dry immediately after washing.

- DO NOT soak the wound area.
- DO NOT go swimming.
- DO NOT pick the wound.

Should the dressing become dirty or wet then it will need replacing by your practice nurse at your GP surgery. Do not cover the dressing or wound with anything waterproof as this can make the wound soggy and it can increase the chance of infection.

If your wound is closed with staples, you can wash the staples and surrounding area but please take special care to thoroughly dry the area after.

## Signs of infection

Please contact your GP should any of the following symptoms develop:

- Redness
- Swelling
- Heat around the wound
- An increase in pain
- Any wound discharge / pus
- Bleeding from the wound
- Fever

Once the wound closure method has been removed, gently massage the area with moisturising cream to encourage good wound healing. Always protect the scar with sunblock.

If anytime the wound comes apart or you are worried by the wound, please contact your GP surgery or return to the Emergency Department.

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## PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or email [rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net](mailto:rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net). You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

## Have your say

Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

Tell us about your experience of our services. Share your feedback on the Care Opinion website [www.careopinion.org.uk](http://www.careopinion.org.uk).

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