University Hospitals Dorset
NHS Foundation Trust

Wound care

Emergency department Patient information

Depending on the type of wound you have, you may have been treated by suturing (stitches), wound closure strips (steristrips) or tissue adhesive glue (super-glue).

For all types of wound you should aim to keep the wound dry for five days.

You will be advised if dressing changes are needed during your attendance. Do not cover the wound with waterproof fingerstalls, plastic bags, etc, unless advised, as this will make the wound soggy and potentially prone to infection - see advice below.

Stitches

Depending on where your wound is, sutures should be removed in 5-10 days and the doctor or nurse will advise you on this. The sutures should be removed by your GP Practice Nurse and you should make plans early to book an appointment with them.

Wound closure strips

Wound closure strips can be removed after 5-7 days. The wound can get wet when washing with clean water only after five days then as the adhesive loosens, the strips can be carefully removed. This can be done at home or by your GP Practice Nurse.

Tissue adhesive

Medical glue does not need to be removed as the glue drops off by itself when the wound is healed. The glue is a special ‘medical glue’ designed to treat wounds.

Keep the wound clean and dry for five days.

A scab will form on the wound, which will come away once you start washing the area.

Do not pick.

There is a small chance the wound will re-open. Don’t worry - come back and we will re-assess the injury.

Signs of infection

Occasionally despite attempts to clean at the time and to keep the wound clean, the wound can become infected. Any excessive redness, swelling, green pus or discharge, offensive odour, or increased pain to your wound can be signs of a local skin infection which can be assessed and treated by your GP or local minor injuries unit (MIU).

If you develop any redness spreading away from the wound, tracking erythema (red lines extending from the wound towards your body) or if you feel unwell or feverish this can be a sign of a more serious infection for which you should seek an urgent review through your local Emergency Department.

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