

Wound or Incision Care

A wound or incision needs to be held together until it heals. To help your child's wound heal, he/she may have sutures (stitches), dermabond, staples, surgical tape (steri-strips), or a combination of these.

Your child needs a follow up visit with his/her surgeon in _____ weeks.

In the meantime, follow these care instructions:

- Keep the wound and dressing clean and dry for 2 days.
- A brief shower may be taken after 2 days, and a bath after 4 days.
- Swimming is allowed 7 days after surgery.
- If the wound becomes dirty, wash it gently with warm soapy water. Pat the wound dry with a clean towel.
- If the outer dressing gets dirty or wet, change the dressing unless you were told not to change it.
- Keep the scar out of direct sunlight for several months after the injury because scars burn easily. Cover it with clothing or SPF 30 sun block.

Read the instructions below for information on your specific type of wound closure:

Dissolvable Sutures (Stitches)

Dissolvable sutures melt away on their own and do not require removal. Often, the dissolvable sutures will be covered by dermabond or steri strips (see below).

Some surgeons cover the steri-strips with a piece of gauze and a clear plastic dressing. This clear dressing should be left in place for 5 days and then removed. When removing the dressing, try to leave the steri strips in place. New dressings over the steri-strips are not necessary.

Sometimes both regular sutures (those that need to be removed) and dissolvable sutures are used. Make sure you know what type of sutures were used on your child.

Even if dissolvable sutures were used, the wound will need to be seen by a doctor for follow up to check for healing or infection.

Dermabond

Dermabond is liquid glue painted over the incision area and does not require a bandage. Dissolvable sutures (stitches) are under the skin and cannot be seen. Dermabond will peel off the incision in 5-10 days. It is best to allow the dermabond to wear off the skin without being pulled off.

Dermabond protects the incision from getting wet so your child may bathe or shower the day after surgery. Soaking in the tub is not advised.

Surgical Tape (Steri-strips)

Surgical tape will usually come off on its own within 7-10 days. If it does not come off after 2 weeks, you may moisten the tape with a clean wet cloth to loosen it, and then peel them off. Usually, it is easier on your child to let the tape fall off.

Sutures

If sutures (stitches) were used to close the wound, the doctor will tell you when they should be removed, generally after 7-14 days. Be sure to schedule an appointment so that the stitches are not left in longer than necessary.

Staples

If staples were used to close the wound, the doctor will tell you when they should be removed, generally in 3-7 days. Be sure to schedule an appointment so that the staples are not left in longer than necessary.

WHEN TO CALL YOUR DOCTOR OR RETURN TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM:

- More pain, redness or swelling at wound edges.
- Fever, drainage with bad odor.
- Red streaks going outward from the wound.
- Wound opens up or bleeding recurs and is difficult to stop.

The information included in this document is for informational purposes only and is not intended to substitute in any way for medical education, training, treatment, advice, or diagnosis by a healthcare professional. A qualified healthcare professional should always be consulted before making any healthcare-related decision.