

Patient Information - Wound Care for Adult Patients

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Patient information leaflet

Emergency Department

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Wound closure

There are various methods of wound closure depending on the type of wound, its location and how easily it is expected to heal. Your clinician has chosen the most effective wound closure for your wound in consultation with you, and sometimes, with other specialists. The method of wound closure

today has been highlighted by your clinician together with the aftercare required.

Sutures (Stitches)

The length of time your sutures need to stay in place depend on the wound location and the type of suture used. Most types of suture used in the Emergency Department have to be removed by a nurse or doctor. Do not attempt to remove the sutures yourself.

Before you leave the Emergency Department, your Clinician will tell you when the sutures need to be removed at your GP surgery.

Medical Staples

If medical staples have been used, the clinician will tell you when the staples need to be removed. A staple remover will have been given to you. Please take this with you when you attend your GP surgery to have the staples removed. Do not attempt to remove the staples yourself.

Medical Glue

Medical skin glue does not need to be removed. The glue will form part of the scab and will fall off in about 10 days' time when the wound is healed.

Steristrips

Sometimes we use steristrips (sticky strips to keep the wound closed), either to close a wound completely, or in combination with one of the other methods listed above. Steristrips can be removed by yourself in 5-7 days' time.

If used as the only wound closure method, they can be moistened to help removal. If they are used in combination with other closure methods, the wound should be kept dry until the other closures have been removed.

Antibiotics & Tetanus Booster Vaccination

Antibiotics may have been prescribed by your clinician, depending on the type and site of your wound. If they are prescribed, follow the instructions on the packaging.

You will only be given a tetanus booster vaccination if you have not had a course of 5 injections in your lifetime, or if you have a type of wound that could particularly be infected by tetanus. This will be discussed with you by your clinician.

How to Care for your Wound

If you have had your wound closed using sutures, medical glue or fabric wound closures, you must keep the wound dressing clean and dry. If it does become dirty or wet within the first 48 hours please book an appointment with your GP practice nurse for a new dressing.

Avoid showering or bathing the affected area for 5 days. This will allow the wound to start to heal well. Do not cover the dressing or wound with anything waterproof unless we tell you otherwise as this may make the wound damp and increase the chance of infection.

If you have had your wound closed with medical staples, you can gently wash the stapled wound and surrounding area with water. Take special care to dry around the staples thoroughly.

For all Wounds

Once the wound closure method has been removed, gently massage the area with moisturising cream three times a day for up to a month, to encourage

good wound healing. Always protect the scar with factor 50 sunblock on sunny days.

Most wounds heal within 2-3 weeks but it may take a few more weeks for the wound to settle completely. Some wounds may require re-dressing by your GP practice nurse.

Complications with Wounds - Wound Infection

The most common wound complication is wound infection, particularly if the wound was caused in a situation where the area isn't clean. You are at increased risk of infection if you:

- Smoke
- Have diabetes
- Have a condition or treatment which affects your immune system or you are having chemotherapy.

If a wound becomes infected, it may,

- Become more painful
- Look red or swollen
- Leak some blood-like liquid, pus or blood
- Have an unpleasant smell
- You may develop a high temperature (above 37.5 °C)

You should contact your GP or practice nurse if any of the above occur or if you have other concerns about your wound.

This leaflet has been developed in partnership with the Patient Information Group and our DGT Patient Partners

Patient Information

Further patient leaflets are available from the Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust website: <https://www.dgt.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/patient-information-leaflets> Please ask a member of staff if you require information in another language or format.

Complaints, Comments, Concerns and Compliments

Please speak to the staff in the ward or department caring for you if you have any concerns or questions relating to your care or that of a loved one.

Compliments can be shared by visiting: <https://www.dgt.nhs.uk/contact-us/compliments>

Alternatively, please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01322 428382 Email: dgn-tr.PALS@nhs.net

Patient Property

Please do not bring large sums of money or valuable items into the hospital. Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property unless it is handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust operate smoke-free hospitals. This means that smoking is not permitted anywhere on hospital grounds. For help to quit smoking please visit www.kentcht.nhs.uk/service/one-you-smokefree/

Use of alcohol or illicit drugs is not permitted anywhere on the hospital site. For drug and alcohol support please speak to your nurse or doctor or

Visit: www.changegrowlive.org/westkent/help

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