

Your wound closure method

- Your wound has been closed today using which should be removed in days.
- Steristrips can be moistened and gently removed.
- Tissue glue does not need to be removed, it will fall off with the scab.
- Sutures and clips can be removed by your General Practitioner or the practice nurse. Please make the necessary appointment for as soon after the recommended removal date as possible.
- Sutures may leave tattoo marks around the wound, if not removed promptly at the recommended time.

Support

- For general medical advice please use the NHS website, walk-in-centres, the NHS 111 service or your GP.
- NHS telephone advice 111
- NHS website www.nhs.uk
- Your own GP and practice nurses are also available for general advice on care of your wound.

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Disclaimer: The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is in no way intended to replace professional clinical advice by a qualified practitioner.

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Brighton and Sussex
University Hospitals
NHS Trust

Wound care Advice for patients

Emergency Department

Royal Sussex County Hospital
Level 5, Thomas Kemp Tower,
Eastern Road, Brighton BN2 5BE
01273 696955 extn. 64261

Princess Royal Hospital
Lewes Road, Haywards Heath RH16 4EX
01444 448745

www.bsuh.nhs.uk



Overview

- Wounds can be closed in three ways or a combination of these:
 - Wound closure strips (steristrips)
 - Wound closure glue
 - Sutures
- Your doctor will have discussed with you about the chosen method of wound closure.

Wound closure strips

- Wound closure strips (steristrips) can be removed after five to ten days depending on the type of injury.
- They are narrow strong adhesive strips that help to close the edges of a small wound and encourage the skin to heal.
- You can soak them off whilst bathing or showering – they should be moistened for about ten minutes and carefully removed. However, it is perfectly safe to leave the strips on the wound until they naturally fall off.
- Occasionally, wound closure strips fall off before the wound has healed. If this happens, please return to the Emergency Department or your GP surgery for further management.

Wound closure glue

- Medical glue is specially designed to treat wounds. It is as strong as stitches and has the added benefit of not leaving stitch marks either side of the wound.
- You should NEVER pick the glue off the wound; skin glue will naturally come off as the wound heals, usually between 5 to 10 days. Please do not pick at this even if it starts to itch. It may help to think of the glue as a 'pretend scab'.
- It is important to keep the wound clean and dry for five days otherwise the glue will dissolve and the wound will open. For scalp wounds, this means NO hair washing.
- Sometimes, steri-strips are used in conjunction with skin glue; in these circumstances treat the wound as if it was glue only.
- There is a small chance the wound will re-open, if it does, please return to the emergency department.

Sutures

- Sutures hold the skin together until it heals itself. Sutures are made from different materials, but most sutures used in the hospital are nylon and need removing at a later date. Some sutures are absorbable and will dissolve without needing to be removed.

- The amount of time that sutures stay in will depend on where the wound is. It is important that you do not exceed this time as sutures may begin to irritate the skin or become buried and difficult to remove.
- You will need to make an appointment with your GP or Practice Nurse to have any sutures removed.

General wound care advice

- In most cases your wound will have been covered with a suitable dressing.
- Do not remove the dressing unless you are instructed to do so. If the dressing becomes soiled or wet, it should be replaced.
- Keep the wound dry, wash around it where possible.
- Do not cover with waterproof fingerstalls, plastic bags etc, unless you are advised to do so. This will make the wound soggy and more prone to infection.
- If the wound becomes hot, painful, red, swollen, smelly, or discharges or re-opens, please inform your GP or call 111 for advice.
- The redness of the scar may take six months or more to fade in colour and may not completely disappear.