



# Suture Care

## Post-Operative Instructions

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### **What are sutures?**

You have had a surgical procedure that required sutures (stitches) to close the wound. These will remain in the skin for three to fourteen days, depending on their location and your surgeon's discretion.

### **What are my post-operative instructions?**

- If antibiotics are prescribed, take your full prescription as directed.
- Discomfort is usually relieved with Tylenol. If a stronger medication is prescribed, follow directions carefully.
- Do not drink alcohol when taking pain medications.
- Swimming may be resumed after the sutures are removed.

### **How do I take care of my incision?**

- Keep the wound and sutures dry for 24 hours, unless advised otherwise.
- After 24 hours, wash the area daily with soap and water, unless instructed otherwise. Avoid soaking the area while sutures are in place.
- Baths may be resumed after the sutures are removed.
- Inspect incisions daily for signs of infection.
- You may be directed to apply a dressing and medication to the wound. Be sure to ask any questions about your care so that you can perform these dressings at home.

### **What will it look like?**

Your surgeon will decide on the appropriate suture needed for your procedure. Generally, one of three kinds of sutures is used:

1. Interrupted - small knots are used to close the wound
2. Over and Over - continuous, loop-like stitches
3. Subcutaneous - a hidden stitch under the skin

### **When should I call my doctor?**

- If you have increased swelling or bruising.
- If swelling and redness persist for a few days.
- If you have increased redness along the incision.
- If you have severe or increased pain not relieved by medication.
- If you have any side effects to medications; such as, rash, nausea, headache, or vomiting.
- If you have an oral temperature over 100.4 degrees.
- If you have any yellowish or greenish drainage from the incisions or notice a foul odor.
- If you have bleeding from the incisions that is difficult to control with light pressure.
- If you have loss of feeling or motion.

### **Who should I call if I have questions?**

- (734) 998-6022, Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- After hours and on weekends, call Hospital Paging at (734) 936-6267 and ask for the Plastic Surgeon on call.

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