



Suture Care

Post-Operative Instructions

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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