

Suture Care

What are sutures?

Sutures are a joining of the edges of a wound by stitching or a similar process. Sutures can sometimes be called stitches.

It is important to care for your sutures to help the healing process.

- It is important to keep your wound dry, especially for the first 24 hours. The wound needs time to heal and moisture will slow this down.

- After the first 24 hours you can wet the wound for a short time, for example in the shower. Pat the wound dry immediately after it gets wet.

- Do not soak the wound or swim until the sutures have been removed.

- Only use creams or emollients (ointments) recommended by your doctor.

- If your sutures are also dressed with bandages, follow the care instructions given by your doctor

- Keep your wound clean and dirt free.

- Avoid any activities that may put strain on the area that has been sutured. This could lead to sutures coming apart.

The healing process

- Do not pick scabs. They will fall off once the wound is healed or when the sutures are removed.

- A slight ooze may occur when the suturing is removed. This is normal.

- It is normal for the scar to be red in colour initially, but this will fade over 2 to 3 months.

Signs of infection

A wound may become infected. Signs of infection are:

- fever within 48 hours of suturing

- redness

- swelling

- increased pain

- excessive or persistent ooze

- pus or smelly discharge.

Pain relief

If you have mild pain, consider taking paracetamol or ibuprofen and follow the manufacturer's instructions.

Removal of sutures

As directed by your GP