



Wound care

This leaflet gives advice on how to care for your wound at home, after leaving the Emergency Department.

Good wound care

Good wound care will help to reduce pain, prevent infection and minimise scarring. Puncture wounds and deep cuts are more likely to become infected than scrapes and abrasions. General wound care includes thorough cleaning, appropriate closure, dressings, resting and elevation of the injured area until pain and swelling are better.

Healing / scarring

Scarring will occur to wounds that are more than superficial – and it may remain red for six months or more. You can help the healing process by massaging the wound, protecting from sunlight and further injury.

What to look out for

- Increased redness or swelling around the wound.
- Pus-like discharge from the wound.
- Increasing pain or an inability to move fingers or toes if the wound was over tendons.
- If the wounds are caused by animal bites, there is a high risk of infection from all the bacteria that are carried on teeth. Usually, these wounds will be cleaned and left open to heal. If the bite is on the face, you may need to be referred to a plastic surgeon for stitches.

Tissue adhesive (“glue”)

Your wound may have been closed with ‘medical glue’, which holds the wound edges together for 5-10 days and then falls off naturally. Do not pick or scratch at the glued area, as this may cause the wound to open up. **Keep the area clean and dry for five days.** A scab will form but this will come off when you start to wash the area. The appearance after healing is similar to the results seen after suturing (stitches).

Steristrips (butterfly stitches)

These are strips of sticky paper or plastic that hold the wound edges together to allow healing. They should be left on for 5-7 days. Keep the area clean and dry or they may peel off before the wound is healed.

They will usually peel away by themselves. If not, to remove them, moisten for 10 minutes and carefully peel off. This can also be done by your practice nurse if you wish.

Sutures (stitches)

You should keep the area around the wound clean and dry until the sutures are removed. The doctor, emergency nurse practitioner or nurse will advise you when the sutures should be removed. After the wound has begun to heal you may leave it open to the air, but be careful not to soak it in water for long periods of time. You may wear a dressing for protection at work. Sutures should be removed by your GP or practice nurse – **you need to make the necessary appointment for this.**

To the GP/ Practice Nurse

Please remove _____ sutures in _____ days

Thank you

RBH Emergency Department

Tell us your views

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your treatment and care, please speak to a senior member of staff or to the nurse looking after you. The matrons are also available during normal working hours and they welcome your views.

Friends and Family Test

Whatever your experience, you can give feedback by completing the Friends & Family test by going online www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/friends-and-family-test/ or using the link sent to you in an SMS text message.

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

RBFT Emergency Department

Reviewed: December 2025

Next review due: December 2027