

## CARING FOR STITCHES

Your child has a wound that needed sutures (stitches). When there is a cut, it must be protected and watched carefully for infection. Even with the best of care, there is a chance that such wounds may become infected by bacteria or other germs. If the wound is to become infected, it generally does so within 1-3 days after it has been sutured. Keep in mind that a slight rim of pinkness or redness confined to the edge of the wound can be normal after suturing. However, the redness should not spread.

### HOME CARE

1. Do not wash the area for 24 hours after suturing. After 24 hours, clean the wound gently with Q-tips using a hydrogen peroxide solution (half water mixed with half hydrogen peroxide) twice a day. This will remove crusts, reduce scarring, and make removal of the stitches easier.
2. Apply a small amount of topical antibiotic ointment after cleaning the wound. Keep it covered with a Band-Aid or other small dressing between cleaning.
3. Try to keep the sutures as dry as possible. Do not expose the sutures to moisture for prolonged periods of time. If they accidentally get wet during bath time, dry them thoroughly.
4. Sutures are ready to be removed at different times depending on the site of the wound. Leaving the stitches in too long can leave marks or scars. If the stitches come out too early, call your doctor. Try to reinforce the wound with tape that pulls the edges together.
5. All wounds heal by scarring. You can minimize scarring by cleaning the wound as follows:
  - a. Clean as directed.
  - b. Protect it from further injury
  - c. Minimize exposure to sunlight.
  - d. Have stitches removed as directed.The scar will continue to heal and fade for up to one year.

### Call the doctor immediately if

- \*\*any unexplained fever over 100 degrees F (37.8 C)
- \*\*there is a red streak on the skin that starts at the wound

### Call the doctor within 24 hours if

- \*\*pus starts to drain from the wound
- \*\*the wound becomes more tender, red, or swollen after two days
- \*\*a stitch comes out too early
- \*\*you have other concerns or questions

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