



Your wound was cleaned and treated in the emergency department today. It may have been closed with stitches, skin glue or tape strips, or left to heal on its own. This sheet explains how to care for it at home.

What is it?

A wound heals best when it is kept clean, protected and not stretched. New skin usually covers a cut within a few days, but the deeper layers take weeks to become strong. Some pain, mild swelling and a little redness at the edges are normal in the first few days.

Looking after yourself at home

- Keep the wound clean and dry for the first 24 to 48 hours. After that, a short shower is usually fine.
- Gently pat the wound dry after washing. Do not soak it in a bath or swim until it has healed.
- Change the dressing if it becomes wet or dirty, and wash your hands before and after.
- Do not pick at skin glue or scabs. Let glue and tape strips fall off by themselves.
- Raise an injured arm or leg on pillows for the first day or two to reduce swelling.
- Ask when your stitches should come out. It is often 5 days on the face and 10 to 14 days near joints.

Medicines

- Paracetamol can help the pain, unless your doctor told you not to. Follow the packet or your doctor's instructions.
- If you were given antibiotics, finish the whole course, even if the wound looks better.
- If you were told you need a tetanus vaccine or booster, make sure you receive it.

Follow-up

- Have your stitches removed by your family doctor or health centre on the day you were told.
- See your family doctor within 2 days if the wound looks worse or is more painful.

Come back to the emergency department or call an ambulance straight away if:

- Bleeding that will not stop with firm pressure
- Increasing redness, swelling, warmth, or pus (infection)
- Fever after the injury
- Numbness, or you cannot move the injured area
- Red streaks spreading from the wound up the arm or leg



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This leaflet is general information to support the advice your doctor or nurse gave you today. It does not replace their advice. If you are worried, seek medical help.

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