
What is a laceration?

A laceration is a cut, wound or opening in the skin that happens from an injury. It may need sutures (stitches), staples, Steri-Strips (small adhesive bandages) or Dermabond (sterile, liquid skin adhesive, or glue) to repair it and close the wound. Some wounds heal well without any repair.

- The wound will take 6 to 12 months to heal all the way.
- It will look red during the healing process.

Sutures and staples

What are sutures and staples?

- Sutures, also called stitches, are special pieces of surgical thread that hold the edges of a wound together.
- Sometimes, a doctor may choose to use staples instead of sutures. Staples are made of a special surgical metal.
- Sutures and staples help to stop bleeding, prevent infection and help the wound heal.

How should I care for sutures and staples?

Your child's doctor may order ointment to put on your child's suture line.

- If so, the doctor will tell you how to use it.
- Do not use alcohol, peroxide or other medicines unless your child's doctor tells you to do so.

When should sutures or staples be removed?

Your child's doctor will tell you when to have the sutures or staples removed. Do not try to remove them yourself. Some sutures dissolve and do not need to be removed.

Steri-Strips

What are Steri-Strips?

Steri-Strips are small adhesive bandages.

- They are used to close shallow wounds.
- They hold the edges of the skin together while it is healing.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.

Laceration care, continued

How should I care for Steri-Strips?

- Steri-Strips will fall off in about 4 to 5 days.
- They will curl up at the edges as the wound heals. Trim the edges of Steri-Strips with scissors as they curl up. Be careful not to cut your child's skin.
- Gently remove them with tweezers if they do not come off in 7 days. Pull them off from the outside toward the middle.

Dermabond

What is Dermabond?

Dermabond is a sterile, liquid skin adhesive.

- It holds the wound edges together.
- It is not the same as Super Glue.

How should I care for Dermabond?

Follow your doctor's advice. Some guidelines include:

- Dermabond most often remains in place for 5 to 10 days. After this, it will peel off on its own.
- Make sure your child does not rub, scratch or pick it. Also tell babysitters, day care staff and school staff not to remove it.
- Do not use any ointments or creams while the Dermabond is there. This may loosen the Dermabond before it is ready to fall off.
- Keep the bandage dry. Replace it if it becomes wet.
 - Do not put tape on the Dermabond.
 - Do not allow your child to swim or soak in water. Also have them avoid activities that may cause a lot of sweating until the Dermabond falls off on its own.
 - Replace the bandage each day until the Dermabond falls off.

What else do I need to know?

If your child has sutures, staples or Steri-Strips, make sure to:

- Keep them dry for the first 24 to 48 hours or as your doctor directs.
 - Your child should not shower for the first 24 to 48 hours.
 - When your child can shower, do not allow them to soak sutures, staples or Steri-Strips in water.
 - Pat dry after a shower, and do not rub the wound.
- Keep a bandage over the wound when your child plays outside.
- Open the wound to air when inside.
- Avoid any activity that could cause your child to reinjure the wound.

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Laceration care, continued

- Use extra sunscreen (SPF 30 or greater) for the next 6 to 12 months to protect the newly-healed skin.
- Get your child a tetanus shot if not up-to-date.

When should I call the doctor?

Call your child's doctor if you notice signs of infection around the wound, such as:

- Increased swelling
- Increased redness around the wound or red streaks moving away from it
- Increased pain
- Pus or drainage
- A bad smell coming from the wound

Also call if your child has a fever (temperature of 100.4°F or higher) or if you have any questions or concerns about how your child looks or feels.

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.

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