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# Wound Care

## Advice for Patients

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## Further Information

We endeavour to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, in the first instance, raise these with the Matron, Senior Nurse or Manager on duty. If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01932 723553 or email [pals@asph.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@asph.nhs.uk). If you still remain concerned please contact our Complaints Manager on 01932 722612 or email [complaints@asph.nhs.uk](mailto:complaints@asph.nhs.uk).

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# Wound Care

Your wound may have been treated by steristrips (butterfly plasters), glue (medical skin adhesive), staples, stitches (sutures) or a suitable dressing. The method used will depend on the type of wound to be closed.

**Once the wound has been closed and/or dressed it is important to keep it clean and dry in order to prevent infection. This applies to all wounds.**

It is advisable not to cover the wound with any form of waterproof covering (plasters, rubber gloves, plastic bags etc.) as these tend to make it soggy, more prone to infection and slower to heal.

If the wound re-opens at any stage do not worry. You can return to the Walk-in Centre and we will re-assess it

## **STERISTRIPS**

Steristrips are used to close superficial wounds to the skin and would normally be removed after about five to seven days (the nurse looking after you will advise about this). A Steristrip should be removed by lifting one end as far as the wound edge and then lifting the other end as far as the wound edge.

If you are unsure about removing the steristrips yourself it is best to book an appointment with the practice nurse at your local GP surgery so that they can be removed for you.

## GLUE

Glue is used to close superficial wounds to the skin. Medical glue does not need to be removed; it lifts off by itself as the scab forms underneath and the wound is healed. This would normally take between five and seven days.

**Do not pick the glue off!** Allow the wound to heal naturally.

## STAPLES

Staples are used to close deeper wounds to the skin and are very useful for head wounds where sutures are more difficult to see, but they can also be used to close wounds on other areas of the body. Staples should remain in place for five to ten days (the nurse looking after you will advise about this) and they need to be removed with a special staple remover which will be given to you. The staples can either be removed by a friend (the nurse may demonstrate this to you) or you can have the staples removed at your local GP surgery by the practice nurse. You will need to book an appointment for this.

## STITCHES

Stitches are used to close deeper wounds to the skin and should remain in place for five to ten days (the nurse looking after you will advise you about this). Stitches should be removed at your local GP surgery by the practice nurse. You will need to book an appointment for this.

## WOUND DRESSINGS

Wound dressings are often used for cosmetic purposes or to cover and prevent dirt from getting in to a closed wound. Occasionally a wound dressing is used in isolation, dependant on whether closure of the wound is either not possible or not recommended (for example wounds with skin loss, old wounds, animal bites, infected wounds). The nature of the wound will decide on the type of dressing used. Dressings will usually need to be changed and reviewed. The nurse looking after you will advise about reviewing and/or changing the dressing. This will usually need to be done by the practice nurse at your GP's surgery and, for this, you will need to book an appointment. .

## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF INFECTION

Most wounds heal well with no problem. However, it is important that you are able to recognise any signs of infection so that, if this does occur, you will be able to seek medical help early and get it treated promptly. These are:

- increased pain at the site of the wound
- increased redness around the wound (slight, very localised redness following any trauma is normal)
- warmth around the wound
- increased swelling around the wound
- discharge from the wound (pus or bleeding) or unpleasant smell from the wound
- raised body temperature, feeling unwell, feverish, depressed

Should you require further advice or assistance please telephone **01932 722025** for Accident & Emergency at St. Peter's Hospital.