

**Associated Surgical Group, S.C.**  
**7303 N. Knoxville Avenue Peoria, Illinois 61614**  
**Telephone: #(309) 691-4005 or #(888) 691-4005**

**SUTURE CARE**

Sutures (stitches) are used to close wounds. Sutures also help stop bleeding and speed healing. Instead of sutures, your wound may have been closed with special strips of tape called steri-strips. Treat these the same way you would sutures. To help your wound heal, follow the following tips.

**KEEP SUTURES CLEAN:**

- \* Avoid doing things that could cause dirt or sweat to get on your sutures. If you can't, cover your sutures to protect them.
- \* Don't pick at scabs. They help protect the wound.
- \* Don't wash the area around your sutures unless your doctor says it's OK. Then, follow instructions for washing and drying.

**KEEP SUTURES DRY:**

- \* Keep your sutures out of water.
- \* To keep sutures dry when around water, cover them with a plastic bag or plastic wrap.
- \* You could also use rubber gloves to protect sutures on a hand.
- \* If sutures get damp, pat them dry.

**CHANGING YOUR DRESSING:**

\* Leave the dressing (bandage) in place until you are told to remove it or change it. Change it only as directed, using clean hands.

\_\_\_\_\_ After the first \_\_\_\_\_ hours, change your dressing every \_\_\_\_\_ hours.

\_\_\_\_\_ Change your dressing if it gets wet or soiled.

\_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**OTHER TIPS:**

- \* To help wounds on an arm or leg heal, use the limb as little as possible.
- \* To help reduce swelling and throbbing, raise the area with sutures above your heart.
- \* To help prevent itching, cover sutures with gauze. If sutures itch, try not to scratch them.
- \* For pain relief, try Acetaminophen or Ibuprofen. Don't use aspirin. It can cause bleeding.
- \* Some sutures need to be removed by a health care provider. Others dissolve on their own. You should be told which kind you have.

**WHEN TO CALL YOUR DOCTOR:**

Call your doctor if you notice any of the following signs:

- \* Increased soreness, pain or tenderness after 24 hours.
- \* A red streak, increased redness or puffiness near the wound.
- \* White, yellowish or foul-smelling discharge from the wound.
- \* Bleeding that cannot be stopped by applying pressure.
- \* Steri-strips fall off or stitches dissolve before the wound heals.
- \* Fever of 101 or more.

**SPECIAL  
INSTRUCTIONS:**

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