

## Patient Information

### Wound Care

Advice after being seen in the Emergency Department

Depending upon the type of wound you have, it may have been treated by suturing (stitches), Steristrips, Tissue adhesive (glue) or just a simple dressing.

#### **General Wound Care Advice:**

- Keep the wound clean – avoid dirty environments
- Keep the wound dry – avoid soaking/submersing in water. Wash around the wound if you can. If it does get wet gently pat it dry with a clean towel
- Do not cover with waterproof finger stalls, plastic gloves etc. unless advised, as this will make the wound soggy and prone to infection
- Avoid picking at any scabs that develop
- The redness of the scar may take 6 months to fade

#### **Specific Wound Care Advice**

- Sutures/Stitches
  - Most stitches will need removed between 5-14 days after they were placed – Your doctor or nurse will let you know
  - Some stitches will dissolve and do not need removed – your doctor or nurse will let you know
  - Some patients may need to return to the Emergency Department for stitches to be removed, but most will not and will be referred to an Investigation and Treatment Room (ITR) for removal.
- Steristrips
  - These can be taken off after 5-7 days. Moisten the steristips for 10 minutes and carefully remove them.
- Tissue Adhesive / Glue
  - There is no need for removal, as the glue drops off when the wound is healed (like a scab)

#### **Planned Review and Removal of Stitches**

- Most wounds do not need formal review as they will heal without problem
- A minority of patients, with complex wounds, will need to return to the Emergency Department for planned review. You will be given an appointment for this prior to leaving the department if needed

#### **Investigation and Treatment Rooms (ITRs)**

- Your local GP Practice no longer provides wound dressings or stitch removal.
- These are now provided by ITRs located across Highland e.g. Inverness, Nairn, Invergordon, Dingwall, etc
- If needed the Emergency Department will refer you to the Investigation and Treatment Room for removal of sutures or ongoing wound management
- Where required and following referral your local Investigation and Treatment Room will contact you directly with an appointment

#### **When to seek urgent review (with GP or nearest Emergency Department)**

- If the wound starts to discharge
- If the wound becomes red, hot or painful
- If the wound re-opens – there is only a small chance this will happen

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