



Laceration Care

A laceration is a cut or lesion that goes through all layers of the skin and into the tissue just beneath the skin.

TREATMENT

Some lacerations may not require closure. Some lacerations may not be able to be closed due to an increased risk of infection. It is important to see your caregiver as soon as possible after an injury to minimize the risk of infection and maximize the opportunity for successful closure. If closure is appropriate, pain medicines may be given, if needed. The wound will be cleaned to help prevent infection. Your caregiver will use stitches (sutures), staples, wound glue (adhesive), or skin adhesive strips to repair the lacerations. These tools bring the skin edges together to allow for faster healing and a better cosmetic outcome. However, all wounds will heal with a scar. Once the wound has healed, scarring can be minimized by covering the wound with sunscreen during the day for 1 full year.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

For sutures or staples:

- Keep the wound clean and dry.
- If you were given a bandage (dressing), you should change it at least once a day. Also, change the dressing if it ever becomes wet or dry, or as directed by your caregiver.
- Wash the wound with soap and water 2 times a day. Rinse the wound off with water to remove all soap. Pat the wound dry with a clean towel.
- After cleaning, apply a thin layer of antibiotic ointment as recommended by your caregiver. This will help prevent infection and keep the dressing from sticking.
- You may shower as usual after the first 24 hours. **Do not** soak the wound in water until the sutures are removed.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- Get your sutures or staples removed as directed by your caregiver.

For adhesive strips:

- Keep the wound clean and dry.
- **Do not** get the skin adhesive strips wet. You may bathe carefully, using caution to keep the wound dry.
- If the wound gets wet, pat it dry with a clean towel.





KJARTAN D. ARMANN, M.D.
Infant, Child and Adolescent Medicine

2516 Samaritan Dr., Suite J
San Jose, CA 95124
Phone: (408) 356-0578
Fax (408) 356-3986
www.kjkidmd.com

- Skin adhesive strips will fall off on their own. You may trim the strips as the wound heals. **Do not** remove skin adhesive strips that are still stuck to the wound. They will fall off in time.

For wound adhesive:

- You may briefly wet your wound in the shower or bath. **Do not** soak or scrub the wound. **Do not** swim. **Avoid** periods of heavy perspiration until the skin adhesive has fallen off on its own. After showering or bathing, gently pat the wound dry with a clean towel.
- **Do not** apply liquid medicine, cream medicine, or ointment medicine to your wound while the skin adhesive is in place. This may loosen the film before your wound is healed.
- If a dressing is placed over the wound, be careful not to apply tape directly over the skin adhesive. This may cause the adhesive to be pulled off before the wound is healed.
- **Avoid** prolonged exposure to sunlight or tanning lamps while the skin adhesive is in place. Exposure to ultraviolet light in the first year will darken the scar.
- The skin adhesive will usually remain in place for 5 to 10 days, then naturally fall off the skin. **DO not** pick at the adhesive film.

You may need a tetanus shot if:

- You cannot remember when you had your last tetanus shot.
- You have never had a tetanus shot.

If you get a tetanus shot, your arm may swell, get red, and feel warm to the touch. This is common and not a problem. If you need a tetanus shot and you choose not to have one, there is a rare chance of getting tetanus. Sickness from tetanus can be serious.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You have redness, swelling, or increasing pain in the wound.
- You see a red line that goes away from the wound.
- You have yellowish-white fluid (pus) coming from the wound.
- You have a fever.
- You notice a bad smell coming from the wound or dressing.
- Your wound breaks open before or after sutures have been removed.
- You notice something coming out of the wound such as wood or glass.
- Your wound is on your hand or foot and you cannot move a finger or toe.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Your pain is not controlled with prescribed medicine.
- You have severe swelling around the wound causing numbness or a change in color in your arm, hand, leg, or foot.
- Your wound splits open and starts bleeding.
- You have worsening numbness, weakness, or loss of function of any joint around or beyond the wound.
- You develop painful lumps near the wound or on the skin anywhere on your body.