

Caring for your... Stitches

STITCHES are used to repair certain types of wounds, such as cuts and tears of the skin. Stitches close the wound, stop bleeding and help healing. This information is for wounds that are completely closed by stitches

If during the first 24 hours the wound bleeds enough to soak the bandage, remove it, and with a clean cloth firmly apply pressure for 15 minutes. When bleeding stops, reapply a clean bandage. If the bleeding doesn't stop or soaks a new bandage, seek medical care immediately.

The first 24-48 hours

In the first 24 hours it is important to keep the wound clean and dry. Activities that place stress or tension on the wound should be avoided.

Paracetamol can help ease pain. Ask your doctor or pharmacist for advice about pain medication. Avoid aspirin and alcohol in the first two days as these can increase the chance of bleeding and/or bruising around the wound.

If possible, raise the wound area above the level of your heart during the first 48 hours, this will help reduce the pain and swelling, and speed up recovery.

It is normal in the first day or two to see a slightly yellow ooze as the wound heals.

If you have any worries about your wound, contact the clinic where you were treated, your general practitioner or your nearest Accident & Medical centre

