

Caring for Your Child's Wound After Stitches

This leaflet provides information about how to look after your child's dressings and wounds following discharge from hospital after surgery under the Oral and Maxillofacial surgery team. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to the staff member in charge of your child's care.

What to Expect

It is normal for the wound area to:

- Be mildly sore or tender for a few days
- Have a small amount of redness around the stitches initially
- Swell slightly during the first 24–48 hours
- Feel itchy as healing occurs

Simple pain relief such as paracetamol or ibuprofen (if suitable for your child) may help.

Looking After the Wound

Wound care

- Avoid soaking the wound for the first 5 days, unless advised otherwise.
- If dried blood present, gently clean the wound with a little cooled boiled water.
- Do not scrub the wound.

Stitches

Your child may have:

- **Dissolvable stitches** – most commonly used, these dissolve on their own and do not require removal
- **Non-dissolvable stitches** – these will need to be removed by your GP in 5-7 days

Dressings (if applicable)

- Leave the dressing in place for usually 5 days, unless advised otherwise. Steri strips can be soaked off in bath if they don't come off easily.
- Replace the dressing if it becomes wet, dirty, or falls off.
- Wash your hands before touching the wound or changing the dressing.

Activity Advice

- Encourage your child to not rub wound area
- Avoid contact sports whilst wound heals around 1-2 weeks

Reducing Scarring

Scars usually fade over time but may take many months to improve.

Once the wound has healed, to help reduce scarring:

- Keep the wound moisturised daily after the dressing steri strips have come off.
- Use high-factor sunscreen (SPF 50).
- Avoid picking scabs or scratching the wound.
- To reduce scarring, your child may benefit from Dermatix (silicone based ointment), apply twice a day for 3 days. You can purchase from your local pharmacy.
- Scar will take around 2 years to fade.

Signs of Infection – Seek Medical Advice If Your Child Has:

- Increasing redness spreading around the wound
- Increasing swelling or pain
- Pus or unpleasant-smelling discharge
- Fever
- The wound reopening
- Red streaks spreading from the wound

Asking for your consent

It is important that you feel involved in decisions about your care. For some treatments, you will be asked to sign a consent form to say that you agree to have the treatment and understand what it involves. You can withdraw your consent at any time, even if you have said 'yes' previously. If you would like more details about our consent process, please ask for a copy of our policy.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about your surgery, please contact us on 020 8725 1233 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

Out of hours, please contact our on-call team via the Trust's switchboard 020 8672 1255 and ask for on call Oral and Maxillofacial surgery team.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or care. You can contact the PALS team on the advisory telephone line Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 2pm to 5pm.

A Walk-in service is available:

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday between 10am and 4pm

Friday between 10am and 2pm.

The Walk-in and Advisory telephone services are closed on Wednesdays.

Please contact PALS in advance to check if there are any changes to opening times.

PALS is based within the hospital in the ground floor main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings.

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS UK

The NHS provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

Web: www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Tel: 111

AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.

