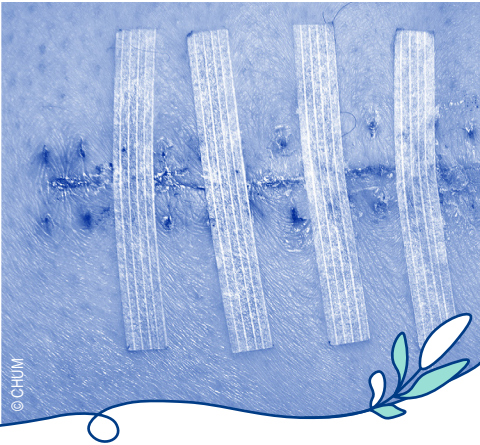




Care and monitoring after staples or stitches are removed

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Caring for your wound prevents complications and helps it to heal.

General advice

- If you have a dressing, keep it dry and clean. You can remove it after 24 hours.
 - When removing the dressing, wash your hands first. Clean your wound and the skin around it using lukewarm water and mild, fragrance-free soap. Rinse with running water. **Avoid using rubbing alcohol or peroxide on the wound.**
 - You can take a shower, but don't let the water hit the wound directly. Follow your nurse's instructions. Gently pat the wound dry without rubbing it. Wait at least 7-10 days before taking a bath or swimming unless your nurse advises otherwise.
 - If your wound is on your scalp, avoid getting your hair wet for at least 48 hours.
- Do not pull out any hairs stuck to the wound, as it may cause bleeding.
 - Do not scratch the wound or pick at any scabs. The scabs will fall off on their own as the wound heals.
- You can take acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol) for pain. Follow the dosage instructions on the package. Consult your pharmacist if needed.
 - Redness, swelling, and warmth around the wound are normal for the first 24-48 hours after staples or stitches are removed.
 - Your wound will leave a permanent scar. To protect it, use sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher) and keep the area moisturized with a cream containing vitamin E.



Notes

When to see a doctor?

Consult a doctor if you notice any of the following signs of infection:

- Increasing redness or swelling around the wound (2.5 cm, or 1 inch);
- Sudden or worsening pain that does not have an obvious cause;
- Yellow or green pus coming from the wound;
- A foul smell coming from the wound that does not go away after cleaning;
- A fever higher than 38.5 °C (101.3 °F) (orally);
- The wound reopens;
- The wound won't stop bleeding;
- The skin around the wound feels abnormally hard.

Advice

If you have wound closure strips (white adhesive strips called Steri-Strips)

- Let the strips fall off on their own, which usually happens within 7-14 days.
- If a strip falls off within the first 7 days, replace it. If it falls off after 7 days, there's no need to reapply it.
 - You can trim any loose parts of the strip as they start to detach.
 - If one side completely detaches, you can remove the entire strip.
- Gently remove any strips that are still on after 14 days.

References:

- Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux de la Montérégie-Ouest (2019). Mes plaies? Je m'en occupe! Guide d'autosoins de plaies. (Dépliant). CISSS Montérégie Ouest, 2p.
- CESS (2017). Méthodes de soins informatisées. Cadre de référence en soins de plaies révisé.
- Institut National d'excellence en santé et en service sociaux (2023). Outil d'aide à la décision de plaies plaie chirurgicale - mai 2023. Gouvernement du Québec, 5 pages.
- Claveau, C., Meziat-Burdin, A., Reeves, I., Chaplain, V. (2023). Plaies chirurgicales. Dans I. Reeves & V. Chaplain. Pratiques exemplaires en soins des plaies de novices à expert Tome 1 (1^{er} éd., p. 943-981).



Important

Procedure: Peel both sides of the strip toward the middle, keeping the strip close to your skin. Avoid pulling the strips off in one quick motion, as this might remove your scab.