

Steristrips

Steristrips are thin adhesive strips that can be used to close small wounds. They are also known as butterfly stitches. Steristrips are applied across the wound to pull the skin on either side of the wound together.

Important information

Keep the wound dry for approximately 3 to 5 days.

After the steristrips are applied, the wound needs time to start healing and any moisture will slow this down. Keep the wound completely dry for the first 24 hours and avoid getting it wet when showering for the remainder of the time as water will loosen the steristrips too quickly.

Do not remove the steristrips.

The steristrips will gradually peel away and drop off. It is important to keep your child from picking at the steristrips.

Wound healing

Ensure that your child's wound is properly healed when the steristrips eventually peel off. It is normal for the scar to be red in colour initially, but this will fade over the next few months.

Observe the wound for signs of infection including:

- fever within 48 hours of the injury or wound
- redness
- swelling
- increased pain
- excessive or persistent ooze
- pus or smelly discharge.

Take your child to the GP or a hospital emergency department if the wound appears to be open or not healing properly.

Pain relief

If your child has mild pain give paracetamol (Panadol[®], Dymadon[®], Panamax[®]) or ibuprofen (Nurofen[®]) and follow the manufacturer's instructions.

Next dose of _____ to be given at _____.



Wound healing and scarring

Scars form as a normal part of healing whenever the skin is damaged. All cuts will heal with a scar. However, the scar will be less noticeable if good care is given to the wound when it is healing.

During the first 6 to 8 weeks after the injury, the scar will change from a thick, red raised scar to a thinner, paler, more flexible one. Scars can take up to 2 years to fully mature. The final appearance of the scar depends on several factors including the extent of the original wound, inherited skin qualities and how well the scar was looked after. Avoid getting the wound dirty.

How to look after your scar

Scar massage

Around 2 to 4 weeks after the injury, scar massage can be performed. This should be done for 5 to 10 minutes, twice a day. Do not massage any scar that is open or looks infected.

For the first 2 to 4 weeks, massage should be done along the same direction as the laceration. The pressure applied should be enough to change the colour of the scar from pink to pale, but should not be so firm that it is painful.

After about 4 weeks, the scar can be massaged in all directions. Continue to massage daily until the scar is pale and thin.

Moisturising

Lotions such as Vitamin E cream, aloe vera, sorbolene or other un-fragranced products can be used to soften the scar and make massage easier.

Sun protection

It is very important to protect the scar from sun damage, which can permanently discolour the scar. You should always cover the scar with at least SPF 30 sunblock or zinc cream, wear clothing that covers the scar and stay in the shade.

Daily activity

It is important that your child avoids activities that will get the wound dirty.

Problem scars

A scar is a problem if it is painful or itchy, hard or raised, restricts movement or remains purple or red.

Risk factors for problem scars include certain skin types (especially dark, Mediterranean or Asian skin), previous problem scars, or post-operative wound complications such as poor healing (greater than 3 weeks) or infection.

You should contact your GP if you are concerned that your child's scar is not healing as expected.



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