

# Staple care

Staples are a reliable method of wound closure and are quick and simple to use.

## Important information

Keep the wound dry for the first 24 hours. The wound needs time to commence healing and moisture will slow this down. After the first 24 hours your child can have a quick shower or bath but avoid prolonged soaking and swimming. Carefully pat the wound area dry and do not rub the staples. Keep your child from picking at the staples or scabs. Scabs will fall off when the wound is healed or the staples are removed. Do not try and remove the staples.

## Pain relief

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

Next dose of \_\_\_\_\_ to be given at \_\_\_\_\_.

## Wound healing

It is normal for the scar to be red in colour initially, but this will fade over the next few months.

## Signs of infection

Observe the wound for signs of infection which may include:

- fever within 48 hours of the injury
- redness
- swelling.

## Staple removal

- The staples are to be removed in \_\_\_\_ days by your GP.
- You will be given a staple remover before leaving which you need to take with you to your GP.
- You may wish to consider giving your child pain relief before this appointment as this may be uncomfortable.

If you are concerned about possible signs of infection or have any other concerns take your child to your GP or local emergency department.

## 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 six to eight 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 two 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.

## How to look after your scar

### Scar massage

After the sutures have been removed from a wound, or around two to four weeks after the injury, scar massage can be performed. This should be done for five to ten minutes, twice a day. Do not massage any scar that is open or looks infected.

For the first two to four weeks, massage should be done along the same direction as the incision. 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 four 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 three 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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