



# Wound Care Discharge Instructions



Clinical Reference Systems

## Wound Care Discharge Instructions

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### Description

Caring for your wound is important to promote healing, avoid infection, and minimize scarring. Wounds heal more quickly when the wound is cleaned and the wound edges are held together (closed).

Abrasions and puncture wounds may only need cleaning, ointment, and a bandage. Small cuts can be held together with tape strips called Steri-Strips® or tissue adhesive spray (adhesive film). If a cut or surgical incision is deep, very long, jagged, or under a lot of tension (such as a cut over a joint), stitches (also called sutures) or staples may be needed to close the wound. The care of a stapled wound is similar to the care of a sutured wound. There are minor differences in caring for a wound with adhesive film.

### Symptoms

Any wound can become infected. Signs of infection may include one or more of the following:

- redness
- red streaks
- swelling
- pus
- drainage
- warmth in the area of the wound
- fever
- increased pain or tenderness

### Causes

Wounds occur when there is a break in the skin. There are many different causes of wounds, some of which are accidental. Examples of causes include:

- surgery
- an abrasion from falling down
- a bite from an animal, insect, or human
- a puncture wound from stepping on a sharp object
- a laceration from cutting yourself with a sharp object

## RESULTS OF TEST(S):

### X-Rays

- [Manually entered]
- [Manually entered]

Results of the X-Rays today are the preliminary readings. If the final results should be read differently, you will be notified.

### Lab Tests/Cultures

- [Manually entered]
- [Manually entered]

Most results from lab and/or cultures take a minimum of 48 hours or longer. Should results involve a change in treatment, you will be notified.

## MEDICATION(S) GIVEN:

### Medication

### Dosage

### Main Desired Action

### Other Comments

- |                      |                      |                      |                      |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| • [Manually entered] | • [Manually entered] | • [Manually entered] | • [Manually entered] |
| • [Manually entered] | • [Manually entered] | • [Manually entered] | • [Manually entered] |

Many medications for pain, anxiety, allergies, or nausea may make you drowsy or lightheaded. You should not drive a vehicle or make any important decisions while you are taking these medications or until cleared by your provider. Operation of a motor vehicle while under the influence of many medications is equivalent to Driving under the Influence (DUI).

## MEDICATION(S) PRESCRIBED / RECOMMENDED:

### Medication

### Dosage

### Main Desired Action

### Other Comments

- |                      |                      |                      |                      |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| • [Manually entered] | • [Manually entered] | • [Manually entered] | • [Manually entered] |
| • [Manually entered] | • [Manually entered] | • [Manually entered] | • [Manually entered] |

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## What You Should Do At Home (Follow-up Care)

- Watch for signs of infection, such as increased swelling, redness, red streaks going away from the wound or cut towards your heart, or any drainage. If you see any of these signs, contact your healthcare provider.
- Steri-Strips® are usually left on until they fall off. If they have not fallen off after 2 weeks, they should be removed.
- Adhesive film usually falls off in 5 to 10 days. The adhesive should not be scratched or picked at.
- For deep cuts the first stitches are placed under the skin. These stitches are made of materials that dissolve and do not need to be removed. Sutures or staples on the surface of the skin usually need to be removed by your healthcare provider 5 to 14 days after they are put in. The length of time depends on where the cut is.

Typically, stitches in your face will be removed in 5 to 7 days after repair of the cut. Stitches or staples in your scalp usually come out about 7 to 10 days after repair, and cuts on arms, legs, fingers or other areas that bend may stay in as long as 7 to 14 days. Your provider will tell you when you should come to the office for removal of your sutures or staples. **Do not** remove sutures or staples yourself unless your provider instructs you to do so.

- **Keep the wound and the area around it clean and dry.**
- **Do not get your wound wet for the first 24 hours if there are stitches or staples.** After 24 hours, you can shower or you can gently wash it with soap and warm water twice a day.
- If **adhesive film** was used, keep the wound dry for the first 4 hours after the adhesive film was put on. After the first 4 hours, you may occasionally and briefly wet the wound in the shower.
- Gently wash **abrasions or puncture wounds** with soap and warm water twice a day.
- After showering or bathing, gently pat the wound dry with a soft towel. If your wound was bandaged, apply a clean, dry bandage.
- Make sure you keep the wound and the area around it clean and dry between washings.
- When you are cleaning your wound, look for signs of infection such as increased swelling, redness, red streaks going away from the wound towards your heart, or any drainage.
- **Do not soak or scrub the wound. Do not take a bath, go swimming, or use a hot tub.**
- Avoid activities that will make you sweat a lot until the adhesive has naturally fallen off or the stitches or staples have been removed.
- Do not scratch, rub, or pick at your stitches, staples, or adhesive film. This may cause them to loosen before the wound is healed.
- Your healthcare provider may recommend that you **cover the wound** with gauze or a bandage to keep it from getting dirty. Be sure to keep the bandage dry. Put on a new bandage if the old one gets dirty or wet.
- **Do not place tape directly over adhesive film** because removing the tape may also remove the film.
- If recommended, put a thin layer of antibiotic ointment (bacitracin or triple antibiotic ointment) on the wound each time you clean it unless skin glue was used to close the wound. This doesn't help the wound heal faster but may prevent infection. It will also help keep the bandage from sticking to the wound. If a rash appears, stop using the ointment.
- **Do not use antibiotic ointment if your wound is closed with adhesive film.** This will cause it to loosen too soon.
- Protect the wound from prolonged exposure to sunlight or tanning lamps while adhesive film is in place.
- Your healthcare provider may recommend leaving the wound "open to air" and not covered by a bandage while you sleep to help speed up the healing process.
- For the first one or two days keep the area propped up higher than your heart. This will help lessen your pain and any swelling.
- **Protect the wound from repeat injury** until the skin has had time to heal.
- If your wound is accidental, treatment may include taking an antibiotic to help prevent infection.

- If you have been given a prescription for an antibiotic, be sure to get it filled right away. Follow the directions exactly. Be certain to take the medicine until it is completely gone. Do not stop giving it just because the wound looks like it is healing well.
- **Please keep all medicines out of the reach of children.**

### What You Can Do To Stay Healthy

- Be careful when handling sharp objects such as knives, scissors, and razors.
- Wear shoes, especially when you are outside.
- Wear a helmet when riding a bicycle.
- Wear a helmet, kneepads, wrist protectors, and elbow pads when skateboarding, rollerblading, or doing other similar activities.

### Care Alerts

#### Call Your Healthcare Provider Right Away Or Return To The Emergency Department If:

- You start to have any signs or symptoms of infection. These include:
  - Your skin is redder or more painful.
  - You have red streaks from the wound going toward your heart.
  - The wound area is very warm to touch.
  - You have pus or other fluid coming from the wound area.
  - You have a fever higher than 101.5° F (38.6° C) orally.
  - You have chills, nausea, vomiting, or muscle aches.
- The wound seems to be opening up or you notice any drainage.
- The stitches or staples are loose.
- The adhesive film is loosening before it is supposed to.
- You have any symptoms that worry you.

### FOLLOW-UP CARE

<b>Date</b> 02/01/2008			
<b>Patient Name</b>	John Doe	<b>Provider Name</b>	Dr. Carol Meyer
<b>Address</b>	4343 N Scottsdale Rd	<b>Address</b>	2963 E 7 <sup>th</sup> Avenue
<b>City/State/Zip</b>	Scottsdale, AZ 85251	<b>City/State/Zip</b>	Phoenix, AZ 85051
<b>Phone</b>	480-663-4800	<b>Insurance Co.</b>	Aetna
<b>DOB</b>	06/15/1948		
<b>Age</b>	60		

**WORK RELEASE / SCHOOL RELEASE:**

- May return to work/school immediately with no limitations.
- Off work/school today; may return next scheduled shift/day.
- Off work/school for \_\_\_ days. Re-check by family/company or preferred doctor prior to return recommended.
- May return to work/school with the following limitations:

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**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF CARE:**

I understand that I \_\_\_\_\_ (or my child \_\_\_\_\_) have received emergency treatment only and follow-up is recommended with my private physician or specialist as soon as possible. If my condition worsens, or new symptoms appear and I cannot contact a physician, I will call or return to this emergency room. My signature below indicates I have received this information and my questions have been answered. I have discussed any concerns with this plan with the nurse or physician. I acknowledge that I am leaving with all of my personal belongings.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Responsible Party

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date