



Information for patients, relatives and carers

Facial Lacerations

If you have been given local anaesthetic to numb the area, this can remain numb for three to four hours. Refrain from playing with or placing anything hot on the area.

Once it has worn off, you will feel discomfort in the area. Take painkillers such as; paracetamol, ibuprofen or co-codamol as directed on the packages. These can all be bought over the counter.

For all wounds the following principles apply:

- Be careful not to cause further trauma or do anything that may increase your blood pressure over the next 24 hours, such as exercise
- Keep the wound dry and if a dressing has been applied do not remove it for at least five days
- Do not encase in waterproof plasters or bags as this will make the wound soggy
- Once a scab has started to form do not pick. This especially applies to wounds treated with glue
- Sometimes the wound may ooze or bleed afterwards. If the wound bleeds then apply firm pressure with a moist, clean handkerchief for 15-20 minutes.

Things to look out for:

- If the wound opens up, then you should contact our department for advice
- If there are any signs of infection, for example redness, pus, or offensive smell from the wound, contact your GP as you may need antibiotics.

Depending on what type of wound you have sustained it may have been treated with stitches (sutures), paper stitches (steri strips) or glue.

Wound closure strips

Keep them dry and leave in place for five to seven days. To remove, moisten with water for about 10 minutes and carefully peel them off. If they are not easily removed by this method, trim them and allow them to drop off naturally.

Glue

Glue does not need to be removed. It will drop off by itself when the wound is healed. It will be dissolved by soap, therefore avoid using soap on the affected area.

Stitches

The wound should be kept clean and moist with a fresh tube of plain Vaseline. Apply three to four times a day to the wound. Remember to remove the old application with clean hands and a tissue before reapplying.

You do not need to keep stitches dry. You may wash, shower, and clean your hair. However, **do not** submerge the stitches. Gentle washing of the wound promotes healing. Avoid soap, shampoo, or detergents.

Stitches - removal

Most stitches we use will dissolve. If they aren't dissolvable stitches, you will be asked to make an appointment at your GP surgery in five to seven days for removal. This may be in the nurse-led clinics.

Facial scars - management

Unfortunately, you will have a scar. No matter how neat the stitches are it is impossible to prevent scarring. Scars can take up to 12 months to settle down.

10-15 percent of wounds may develop into a keloid scar. This is an overgrowth of scar tissue which is usually raised, firm and larger than the original wound. Unfortunately, there is no cure for keloid scars. Treatment can help to flatten or reduce irritation.

Keloid scars can affect anyone, but is commonly seen in people with dark skin, particularly people of sub-Saharan, Hispanic, or Chinese descent.

It can take three to four weeks for keloid scarring to develop. If you have concerns, please contact your GP for further advice.

Improving the quality of the scar

Healing skin is very sensitive to sunlight and should be protected from the sun with high factor sun protection once the stitches have been removed.

Your clinician may ask you to massage the area with a clean finger to improve the healing process. If you are unhappy with the quality of your scar once the area has fully healed, then please ask your GP to re-refer you for a follow-up appointment.

① If you have further concerns about your condition, please contact your GP. If you are not sure what to do, call 111 or get help from 111 online: <https://111.nhs.uk/> [When to use NHS 111 - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/when-to-use-nhs-111/)

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email pals@york.nhs.uk

An answer phone is available out of hours.

Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

If you require this information in a different language or format, for example Braille, large print, Easy Read or audio, please ask the staff who are looking after you.

Date this version published	November 2022
Review Date	October 2025
Document Reference	PIL1451 v2, Facial Lacerations

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