



**CHU
Sainte-Justine**
Mother and Child
University Hospital Centre

Université 
de Montréal

Your child had a skin laceration

Information leaflet for parents



Your child had a laceration that required repair. You probably received a lot of information during your visit to the hospital. This pamphlet summarizes what health care professionals have told you about management at home.

What is a laceration?

A laceration is a cut in the skin.

How are lacerations managed?

When the wound is superficial and the edges of the wound close easily, a special glue (**used in medicine only**) can be applied. It is as effective as stitches in this situation.

In certain cases where the wound is more irregular, deep or in a particular location (for example, on a joint), stitches are considered better. There are different types of stitches.

Your child's injury has been repaired using the following type of treatment:

- Glue
- Dissolvable or "melting" stitches
- Non-dissolvable or "to be removed" stitches
- Steri-Strips (with/without glue or stitches)



Wound care at home for all, whether or not it required a repair at the hospital:

- A skin cut is an opening for bacterial infection. It is important to wash your hands before caring for your child's wound.
- Prevent your child from scratching the wound or picking off the scab. It will fall off naturally.
- Unless otherwise directed by the doctor, if the wound required repair:
 - **The wound must remain dry for the first 48 hours.**
 - Wait a week before bathing it. After bathing it, for the first month, clean the wound gently.
 - If the wound has a dressing on, keep it in place for the first 48 hours. Then leave it in the open air.
- If your child complains of pain, you can give acetaminophen at the specified dosage.
- After 48 hours, gently begin cleaning the wound daily with unscented soap and water. Be sure to wash your hands before and after cleaning the wound.
- Watch for signs of infection including redness around the wound, yellow or green discharge, swelling or fever. Note that any one of these signs may indicate an infection. In this case, consult a doctor.

Specific advice, in addition to the above depending on the type of repair:

- **Glue**
 - Do not apply any greasy substances (such as antibiotic ointment) to the wound for 7 days.
- **Dissolvable or "melting" stitches:**
 - After cleansing the wound daily (after the first 48 hours), apply an antibiotic ointment.
 - **Allow the stitches to fall out naturally.** Do not pull on the stitches. If they have not fallen out after 10 days, consult your CLSC, a walk-in clinic or your family doctor.
- **Non-dissolvable or "to be removed" stitches:**
 - After cleansing the wound daily (after the first 48 hours), apply an antibiotic ointment.
 - The doctor will give you a note telling you when to have the stitches removed.
 - The CLSC in your neighbourhood or your family doctor can remove them. Ask them if you need any more information.
- **Steri-Strips:**
 - If there are any Steri-Strips on the wound, let them fall off naturally. You can cut any edges that come unstuck with scissors.

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Particular wound

Laceration in the mouth

- Most mouth lacerations do not require repair.
- For children who are old enough (6-8 years old and over), rinse the mouth with a saltwater solution (about ½ tsp of salt in a cup of water).
- Watch for signs of infection including yellow or green discharge, swelling or fever. In this case, consult a doctor.

When should you see a doctor?

- If any signs of infection appear including redness around the wound, yellow or green discharge, swelling or fever.
- If the wound reopens.
- If your child has dissolvable (melting) stitches and the stitches have not fallen out after 10 days.

If you have any questions, you can call Info-Santé (811) or your doctor.

Healing of a laceration

- Any laceration will leave a scar. In the first weeks of healing, the mark may be red or purple. This will fade with time.
- Once the scab has fallen off (about 2-3 weeks), begin to apply vitamin E cream or ointment while massaging the wound for about 5 minutes, 3 times a day for 3 months.
- Over the next year, for outdoor activities it is recommended to apply sunscreen over the scar to prevent hyperpigmentation (brownish colour).

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