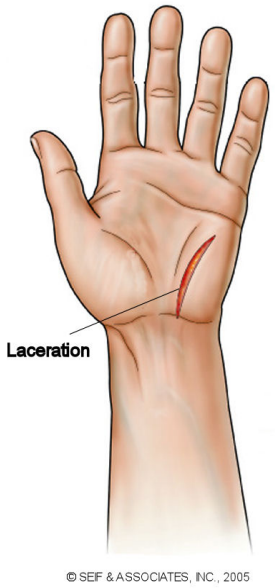
Laceration Care, Child

A laceration is a cut that goes through all layers of the skin. The cut goes into the tissue beneath the skin.

HOME CARE



Instructions for stitches (*sutures*) or staples:

- Keep the wound clean and dry.
- If your child was given a bandage for the cut, you should change it once a day. Also, change it if it gets wet or dirty.
- Wash the area 2 times a day with soap and water. Rinse with water. Pat dry with a clean towel. Look for signs of infection (*pus*).
- After washing, put on ointment as told by your doctor.
- Your child may shower after the first 24 hours. Be careful not to soak the area in water until the stitches are removed.
- Only use medicine as told by your doctor.
- The stitches must be removed as instructed. Call your child's doctor for an appointment to remove the stitches or staples. If you do not have a doctor, return to the emergency department as instructed to have your child's stitches or staples removed.

Instructions for skin adhesive strips:

- Keep the area clean and dry.
- **Do not** get the skin adhesive strips wet. Bathe carefully.
- If the area gets wet, pat it dry with a clean towel.
- Skin adhesive strips will fall off on their own. You may trim the strips as the wound heals. **Do not** remove strips that are still stuck to the area.

Instructions for skin glue:

- Briefly wetting the wound in the shower or bath is okay. However, **do not** soak or scrub the wound. **Do not** swim. **Do not** do things that will cause sweating until the skin glue has fallen off on its own.
- After showering or bathing, gently pat the wound dry with a clean towel.
- **Do not** apply liquid, cream, or ointment medicines of any kind to your child's wound while the skin glue is in place. This may loosen the glue before your child's wound is healed.
- If a bandage is placed over the wound, use special care not to apply tape directly over the skin glue. That may cause the glue to be pulled off before the wound is healed.
- Your child should avoid being in the sun for a long time while the skin glue is in place. This includes tanning beds.
- The skin glue will usually remain in place for 5 to 10 days. Then, it falls off the skin. **Do not** allow your child to pick at the glue.

YOUR CHILD MIGHT NEED A TETANUS SHOT IF:

- You cannot remember when your child's last tetanus shot was.
- Your child has never had a tetanus shot.
- The object that caused your child's wound was dirty.

GET HELP RIGHT AWAY IF:

- Your child has a temperature by mouth above 102° F (38.9° C), not controlled by medicine.
- Your baby is older than 3 months with a rectal temperature of 102º F (38.9º C) or higher.
- **Your baby is 3 months old or younger with a rectal temperature of 100.4º F (38º C) or higher.**
- There is redness, swelling, increasing pain, or fluid (*pus*) coming from the wound.
- There is a red line that goes up your child's arm or leg.
- You notice a bad smell coming from the wound or bandage.
- The wound edges come open.
- You notice something coming out of the wound, such as wood or glass.
- Your child is not able to move the wounded finger or toe (if the wound is on the hand or foot).
- There is severe puffiness (*swelling*) around the wound, causing pain and numbness, or a change in color on the arm, hand, leg, or foot.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your child's condition.
- Will get help right away if your child is not doing well or gets worse.

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