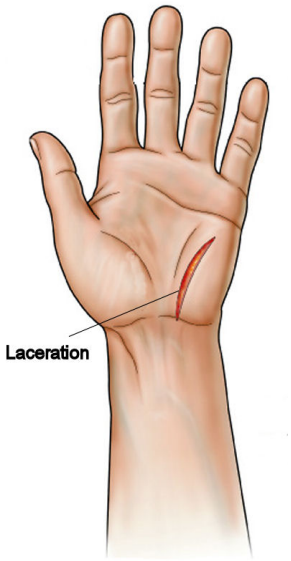
Laceration Care, Child

A laceration is a cut or lesion that goes through all layers of the skin and into the tissue just beneath the skin. Your child's caregiver used either sutures, staples, wound glue (*adhesive*), or skin adhesive strips to repair the laceration. These tools bring the skin margins together to allow for faster healing and a better cosmetic outcome. All such wounds will heal with a scar. Once the wound has healed, scarring can be minimized by covering the wound with sunscreen during the day for one year.



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HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUTURES OR STAPLES

- Keep the wound clean and dry.
- If your child was given a dressing, you should change it at least once a day or if it becomes wet or dirty or as instructed.
- Twice a day, wash the area with soap and water and rinse with plain water to remove all soap. Pat (do not rub) dry with a clean towel. Look for signs of infection (see below).
- After cleaning, apply a thin layer of the antibiotic ointment recommended by your child's caregiver. This will help prevent infection and keep the bandage from sticking.
- Your child may shower as usual after the first 24 hours, but should not soak the area in water until the sutures are removed.
- Only give your child over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by their caregiver.
- Your child had stitches or staples placed. These must be removed as instructed. Call your child's caregiver for an appointment to remove the stitches or staples. If you do not have a doctor, return to the emergency department to have your child's stitches or staples removed.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS FOR SKIN ADHESIVE STRIPS

- Keep the area clean and dry.
- **Do not** get the skin adhesive strips wet. Your child may bathe carefully, using caution to keep the area dry.
- 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 skin adhesive strips that are still stuck to the area. They will fall off in time.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS FOR WOUND ADHESIVE

- Your child may briefly wet his or her wound in the shower or bath. **Do not** soak or scrub the wound. **Do not** swim, and avoid periods of heavy perspiration until the skin adhesive 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 medications of any kind to your child's wound while the skin adhesive is in place. This may loosen the film 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 adhesive, as this may cause the adhesive to be pulled off before the wound is healed.
- Your child should avoid prolonged exposure to sunlight or tanning lamps while the skin adhesive is in place.
- The skin adhesive will usually remain in place for 5 to 10 days, then naturally slough off your skin. **Do not** allow your child to pick at the adhesive film.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- There is redness, swelling, increasing pain, or pus coming from the wound.
- There is a red line that goes up your child's arm or leg.
- You notice a foul smell coming from the wound or dressing.

- Your child has an oral temperature 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 highe**r.
- The wound edges re-open.
- You notice something coming out of the wound such as wood or glass.
- The wound is on your child's hand or foot and you find that they are unable to properly move a finger or toe.
- There is severe swelling around the wound causing pain and numbness or a change in color in your child's arm, hand, leg or foot.

YOU MIGHT NEED A TETANUS SHOT NOW IF:

- You have no idea when you had the last one.
- You have never had a tetanus shot before.
- Your cut had dirt in it.

If you need a tetanus shot, ***and you decide not to get one***, there is a rare chance of getting tetanus. Sickness from tetanus can be serious. *If you got a tetanus shot, your arm may swell, get red and warm to the touch at the shot site. This is common and not a problem.*

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