How to Care for Your Stitches, Staples or Skin Adhesive Strips

Stitches (*sutures*), staples and skin adhesive strips hold the skin together as it heals. They will usually be in place for 7 days or less.

HOME CARE

- Wash your hands with soap and water before you touch your wound.
- Only use medicine or ointment ordered by your doctor.
- Cover your wound only if your doctor told you to. Otherwise, leave it open to air.
- Wash your hands again after touching your wound.
- Do not get your stitches wet or dirty. If they get dirty, dab them gently with a clean washcloth. Wet the washcloth with soapy water. Do not rub. Pat them dry gently.
- Do not put medicine or ointment on your stitches unless your doctor told you to.
- Do not take out your own stitches or staples. Your skin adhesive strips will fall off by themselves. Skin adhesive strips usually fall off within 7 days. Do not pick at the wound. Picking can cause an infection.
- Do not miss your follow-up appointment.
- If you have problems or questions, call your:
  - Doctor.
  - Clinic.
  - Nurse where you were a patient.

GET HELP RIGHT AWAY IF:

- Fever over 101º F (38 º C) develops.
- Chills develop.
- You have redness or pain around your stitches.
- There is swelling around your stitches.
- You notice drainage from your stitches.
- There is a foul smell from your wound.

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