Absorbable Suture Repair

Absorbable sutures may be used deep in a wound to help hold it together or through the skin or mouth. If these stitches are below the skin, the body will absorb them completely in 3-4 weeks. If they have been used on your skin, they may absorb rapidly and may not need to be removed by your caregiver. As your wound begins to heal over the next 7-10 days, the sutures are no longer needed, and they typically begin to fall off at about this time. If you have not had a tetanus booster in the past 5 years, you may need a tetanus shot.

Keep skin wounds clean and dry for the next 2-3 days, then you may gently wash it and dress it with an antibiotic ointment as recommended. **Watch for signs of infection: redness, heat, swelling, pain, and drainage. Call your caregiver or the emergency department right away if you think you have a wound infection**. At 7-10 days if your stitches are loose, you can remove them by wiping with a clean gauze pad or a cotton ball. Do not pull your stitches out. They should wipe away easily. Have your caregiver take them out if they are still in place after 10 days.

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