Care of Multiple Lacerations

Lacerations are cuts or lesions that go through all layers of the skin and into the tissue just beneath the skin.

These have been repaired using either suturing, stapling, or skin adhesive strips. This brings the skin margins together to allow for faster healing and decrease the likelihood of infection and bleeding.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- If you were given dressings, change them at least once a day or as instructed by your caregiver. If the bandages stick, soak them off with soapy water.
- Twice a day, wash the area with soap and rinse with plain water to remove all the soap. Pat dry with a clean towel. Look for signs of infection (see below).
- Re-apply prescribed creams or ointments as instructed. This will help prevent infection. This also helps keep the bandage from sticking.
- If the bandages become wet, dirty, or develop a foul smell, change them as soon as possible.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- Have your sutures, staples, or skin adhesive strips removed as instructed by your caregiver. Skin adhesive strips will peel off from the outer edges toward the center and will eventually fall off. Report to your caregiver if the strips are falling off and the wounds do not appear fully healed.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- There is redness, swelling, or increasing pain in the wounds.
- There is a red line that goes up your arm or leg.
- Pus is coming from wounds.
- You develop an unexplained oral temperature above 102º F (38.9º C).
- You notice a foul smell coming from the wounds or dressing.
- There is a breaking open of the wounds (edges not staying together) before or after sutures have been removed.
- You notice something coming out of the wounds such as wood or glass.
- The wounds are on your hand or foot and you find that you are unable to properly move a finger or toe.
- There is severe swelling around the wounds causing pain and numbness or a change in color in your arm, hand, leg, or foot.
- Pain is not controlled with prescribed medication, or over-the-counter medicines for pain.
- There is severe swelling around the wound sites.
- The wounds split open and bleeding recurs.
- You experience worsening numbness, weakness, or loss of function of any joint around or beyond the wounds.
- You develop painful lumps near the wounds or on the skin anywhere on your body.

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.*

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.

- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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