Lacerations on the Face

Cuts on the face usually heal quickly but need special care to reduce the scarring. Keep the cut clean. Dressing should be left on, clean and dry, for 48 hours. After 48 hours most cuts can be opened to the air. After 24 hours gently clean the wound with mild soap and warm water and a cotton swab. This will prevent scabs and crusts from forming over the sutures. You can also use a warm, wet washcloth. **If you allow a scab to stay on too long, it may leave a wider scar when the stitches come out.** Apply antibiotic ointment two to three times per day to cover the healing cut after cleaning it until suture removal. You may apply petroleum jelly to the cut to keep the area moist until completely healed. The sutures in facial lacerations should usually be taken out in 4-5 days to avoid stitch marks.

It will take 1-2 years for the scar to lose its redness and to heal completely. Wait a few days after your stitches are removed before applying makeup. You should protect your healing wound by using a sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30 to reduce the pigment that will form in the scar. When applying the sunscreen, massage the completely healed scar (do not massage healing wounds) for a few minutes to help reduce the appearance of the scar (reduces redness and swelling of scar). Use circular motions with your fingertips, on and around the scar.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF YOU DEVELOP:

- Redness, pain, or swelling around the wound.
- Pus-like drainage.
- Chills or a fever.
- You or 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 higher.**

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 wound had dirt in it.
- If you need a tetanus shot, and you choose 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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