

Subcuticular Stitch Advice

PRACTICE NURSE INFORMATION – Thank you for your help

This patient has a Monocryl subcuticular stich in place:

Option 1 - Snip and pull out the entire stitch

Pull up one end of the stitch and cut the knot. Pull the other end and try to remove the entire stitch. You may need to wrap the stitch around the forceps to obtain some traction. If it does not pull out, just snip the knot and leave in place. It will typically dissolve within 6-8 weeks.

Option 2 – Snip end and leave the stitch in place

Pull up one end of the stitch and cut the knot. Do the same on the other side and remove both ends leaving the stitch in place. Advise that it may take 6-8 weeks for the stitch to completely dissolve.

PATIENT INFORMATION

- Please make an appointment with your practice nurse to have your stitches removed on the above date

GENERAL WOUND ADVICE

- **WOUND CARE**

It is important to rest for 48 hours following skin surgery to reduce complications. Activities like shopping, cycling, and dog walking should be avoided unless instructed otherwise. The dressing should be kept in place until your stitches are removed and are shower-proof. If you do remove the wound dressing, gently wash the wound with warm water and a use a cotton tipped bud to remove any surface crusting or exudate. Apply Vaseline to keep the wound moist. This may be repeated once or twice daily to help produce the best cosmetic results.

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- **PAIN**

Take Paracetamol if your wound is painful or before the local anaesthetic wears off. If this fails to ease the pain, try taking some Ibuprofen. Try to avoid Aspirin as this can increase the risk of bleeding.

- **BLEEDING**

It is normal to expect some oozing of blood from the wound. Apply pressure constantly if bleeding develops for at least 15 minutes and repeat this if necessary. It should eventually stop. It is extremely important that you rest completely if bleeding occurs as this will help to keep your blood pressure down.

- **INFECTION**

Infection can complicate any operation and usually appears 2-7 days after the procedure. You may notice increasing pain, redness and swelling. Occasionally, pus may discharge from the wound edge. If infection occurs, ask your GP for a prescription for some antibiotics.

- **INTERNAL STITCHES**

Internal stitches may be used to provide wound strength under the edges of the wound. They generally dissolve within 4-8 weeks but may cause a small blood blister or a non-healing area. Your practice nurse may need to probe this area and pull-out the stitch if this complication occurs.

- **AFTER SUTURE REMOVAL**

Wound strength takes 4-6 weeks to develop and up to 12 months to fully heal. It is important to avoid strenuous exercise for 6 weeks after your operation to make sure that the wound does not break open. This is extremely important for wounds on the legs, arms and upper back/chest. You may wish to apply Micropore Tape for 4 weeks to support the wound and improve the eventual scar. Silicone gels (Dermatix®) may also help.