

Emergency Services

Cuts, Scrapes, and other Wounds

Follow-up Instructions

About your wound:

See your family doctor in _____ days.

About your stitches:

- They will dissolve on their own.
- Have them removed in _____ days.
- Remove them yourself in _____ days using the kit and instructions we give you.

You have had an injury causing a break in your skin. This is called a wound.

We have cleaned your wound and may have covered it with a bandage (dressing).

We may have needed to close your wound with stitches (sutures), special tape, or skin glue.

The pain from your wound should go away over the next 24 to 48 hours.

Any bruising will go away over time.

How to take care of yourself at home

- Keep the bandage clean and dry.
- When you shower or bath, try not to get your bandage wet. If possible, cover the bandage with plastic.
- Unless you have been told differently, change your bandage in 24 hours.
 - If the bandage is stuck to the wound, use warm water and soap to soak the bandage off.
 - Gently clean around your wound with warm water and soap. Do not use alcohol, hydrogen peroxide, or other antiseptic cleaners. These can slow healing.
 - Place a clean bandage over your wound.
- If your wound begins to bleed, put pressure on the site for 10 to 15 minutes.
- Change the bandage every day or when it gets wet or dirty.

Specific instructions

If your wound is on your arm or leg	Rest your arm or leg up on a pillow for the next 24 hours.
If your wound is in your mouth or on your lips	Rinse your mouth after meals with a solution of warm salted water. Do not swallow the solution. To make the solution, stir one teaspoon of salt in 250 mL (1 cup) of warm water.
If your wound is on your head	You can wash your hair gently or have someone wash it for you. Dry the area well.
If you have stitches that dissolve	If not dissolved within 10 days, spread Vaseline over them 2 times a day. If still there after 3 to 4 weeks, try to remove them gently with tweezers. If you cannot remove them, arrange to have them removed by a doctor or in a community clinic.

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The information in this document is intended solely for the person to whom it was given by the health care team.

When to get help

Arrange to see your family doctor if your wound shows any of these signs of infection:

- Increasing redness or swelling around the wound
- Increasing pain or soreness of the wound
- White, yellow, or green thick fluid coming from the wound (pus)
- A bad smell coming from the wound
- A fever over 38.5°C (101.3°F)

Go to the nearest Emergency Department if any of these happen:

- You have bleeding from the wound that does not stop even after you put pressure over the bleeding area for 15 minutes.
- You have numbness or swelling below the location of your wound.
- You cannot move the joint below your wound.
- You have red streaks under your skin, travelling outward from the wound.

To learn more, it's good to ask:

- Your family doctor
- Your pharmacist
- Fraser Health Virtual Care
1-800-314-0999 or live chat online at fraserhealth.ca/virtualcare
10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., daily
- HealthLinkBC - call 8-1-1 (7-1-1 for deaf and hard of hearing) or go online at HealthLinkBC.ca