

Emergency department

Wound care

Information for patients, relatives and carers

Introduction

Please follow the advice in this leaflet to help make sure your wound heals as quickly as possible:

- keep your wound clean and dry
- be careful not to scratch your wound
- avoid contact sports or other activities that may cause the wound to break open again
- do not cover your wound with any waterproof dressing unless told to by a doctor / nurse, as this may cause it to become soggy (wet) and increase the risk of infection
- if your dressing gets wet or dirty in the first 48 hours go to your local pharmacy to get another dressing or make an appointment with the nurse at your GP surgery

Stitches

- Your stitches should stay dry for 24 hours and may be covered with a dressing during this time
- After this you can start to get the area wet, but don't soak the wound and dab the area dry rather than rub it with a towel
- The stitches will need to be removed by a nurse. Please make an appointment with the practice nurse at your GP surgery for this to be done

How long your stitches stay in depends on where they are:

| | Face | Joints | Rest of the body |
|------------------|---------|------------|------------------|
| Stitches removal | <5 days | 10-14 days | 7-10 days |

Wound glue

- Wound glue forms a 'scab' over the wound
- Do not cover it with a dressing unless told to do so
- It is important to try and keep the glue dry for 5 days. After 5 days, you can start to get it wet but don't soak it. Dab the wound dry rather than rub it with a towel
- The glue will come off like a scab, usually after 7-10 days
- We do not recommend putting a plaster or dressing over the glue, as they may pull the glue off when they come off

Steri-strips

- Steri-strips hold the edges of a wound together. If they get wet, they come off, so it is important that they stay dry. Don't wet the area – use a flannel to wash it whilst keeping the area dry
- Do not cover it with a dressing unless told to do so
- After 5 days the steri-strips can be taken off; this is done by wetting them with a damp cloth and peeling them off

Signs of wound infection

A small amount of clear, watery discharge from a wound is normal.

If you notice any of the following signs of infection developing, please seek medical advice from your GP practice nurse or NHS walk-in centre immediately:

- swelling
- redness around the wound
- pus (yellow/green discharge) or bleeding from the wound
- the wound feeling hot
- increasing pain
- fever

Useful emergency contacts

St Mary's Hospital's emergency department

South Wharf Road
London W2 1NY
Telephone 020 3312 6330

Charing Cross Hospital's emergency department

Fulham Palace Road
London W6 8RF
Telephone 020 3311 1005

Hammersmith Hospital's emergency department

Du Cane Road
London W12 0HS
Telephone 020 3313 4691

Eye emergencies (24-hour)

Western Eye Hospital
171 Marylebone Road
London NW1 5YE
Telephone 020 3312 3241

NHS 111

If you have an urgent medical problem and are not sure what to do, call 111 and speak to a fully trained adviser. Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Alcohol liaison nurses

Charing Cross and Hammersmith hospitals: 020 3313 0244

St Mary's Hospital: 020 3312 7663

Drinkline

Free helpline: 0300 123 1110 (weekdays 09.00–20.00, weekends 11.00–16.00)

Sexual health clinic

Jefferiss wing

St Mary's Hospital

Praed Street

London W2 1NY

Telephone: 020 3312 1697 (general enquiries)

020 3312 7583 (sexual health and HIV advice)

How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3313 0088** (Charing Cross, Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte's & Chelsea hospitals), or **020 3312 7777** (St Mary's and Western Eye hospitals). You can also email PALS at **imperial.pals@nhs.net** The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Complaints department

Fourth floor

Salton House

St Mary's Hospital

Praed Street

London W2 1NY

Email: **ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net**

Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team:

imperial.communications@nhs.net

Wi-fi

We have a free wi-fi service for basic filtered browsing and a premium wi-fi service (requiring payment) at each of our five hospitals. Look for WiFiSPARK_FREE or WiFiSPARK_PREMIUM

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