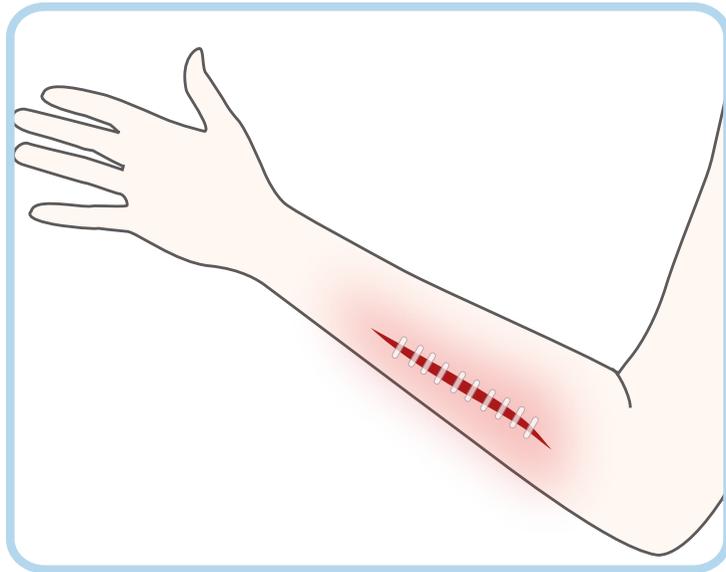


Wound care / Laceration



 Office d'éducation des patients du CUSM
MUHC Patient Education Office



This material is also available on the
MUHC Health Education Collection (<http://infotheque.muhc.ca/>)
MUHC Patient Education Office (www.muhcpatienteducation.ca).

This material was developed by the McGill
University Health Centre Emergency Department.

What is wrong?

You have a deep cut or wound. It will heal more quickly if the edges of the wound are held together closely with stitches (sutures), tape (Steri-strips™) or glue.

What should I do at home?

- ▶ If you have stitches, do not wet the area for the first 24 hours. After 24 hours, you can wash the area with mild soap and water and pat dry. Do not scrub the wound.
- ▶ If you have a bandage, do not touch it for the first 24 hours. If it becomes stained with blood, make the bandage thicker by adding more gauze. You can remove the bandage after 24 hours.
- ▶ If you have skin glue or Steri-strips™, do not wet the area until it all falls off. Glue and Steri-strips™ will start to dry and fall off in 5 to 10 days but may stay longer. **Do not scrub the wound.**
- ▶ Do not pick at the sutures, tape or glue. It may cause the wound to open or get infected.
- ▶ **Do not** wet the area for the first 24 hours.
- ▶ Have the stitches or sutures removed when instructed. Do not remove them yourself. They will be removed at different times depending on the type and location on your body. If they are removed too late, they can cause scars or lead to an infection. If you have absorbable sutures, they do not have to be removed and will break down on their own.
- ▶ If the injury is over a joint, avoid stretching the joint so the wound does not open.
- ▶ For the next few months, apply sunscreen to the area and avoid exposing the scar to the sun so that it does not get darker.

When am I going to feel better?

It takes approximately 6 weeks for the strength of the skin to return to normal but many months for the scar to take its final form.

Should I see another doctor?

You will receive a prescription if you need to have the stitches removed. You can go to your local CLSC or a clinic of your choice and a nurse will remove them.

When should I come back to the Emergency Department?

You should return right away if:

- ▶ Your wound becomes red, painful or infected with pus
- ▶ You develop a fever (38°C/100.4°F)
- ▶ Your stitches come apart
- ▶ Your wound does not stop bleeding