

Stitches (sutures)

I have used stitches (sutures) to close your wound. This is to help the wound to heal effectively and to minimise the chance of infection. You should

- keep the area clean
- Keep the area dry for the first 48 hours (ie wash around the area with a cloth)
- keep an eye on the wound (where the stitches are) for any signs of infection

Protect your stitches

Resist the urge to scratch your stitches as, even though they are strong, you may damage them.

After 48 hours you can shower normally but do not rub the stitched area. It is best to have a shower rather than soak in a bath.

After washing, dab your stitches dry with a clean towel, even if the wound area didn't get wet, to ensure that the area is completely dry.

STITCHES

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Advice for fighters who have had stitches



Removing your stitches

Your stitches are not dissolvable and you will need to have them taken out. This can usually be done in the treatment room at your local health centre. Occasionally it is done by the practice nurse. You should phone for an appointment as soon as possible.

When to have your stitches out depends on where they are:

- Face - 5 days
- Scalp - 7 days
- Hands/ arms/ legs - 7 days
- Trunk - 10 days

Do not leave your stitches for longer than this. They can leave unnecessary skin marks and occasionally scarring. It also makes them more difficult to remove.

Returning to training

Wound healing continues long after your stitches come out. To give your wound the best chance of healing properly you should not return to training for at least 1 week after the stitches come out.

Even then you should avoid direct impact or friction to the area for a further 2 weeks.

Chloramphenicol ointment

For facial wounds I would suggest the use of Chloramphenicol eye ointment 1%. You can buy this in a pharmacy.

Chloramphenicol ointment for use on the skin is not manufactured in the UK. Chloramphenicol **eye** ointment is available but it is not licensed for use on the skin. This means that although the product license is not for this condition, doctors have found that it works well.

Using chloramphenicol eye ointment on facial wounds is common across the UK. It helps to prevent scarring and also may help to prevent infection.

1. Wash and dry your hands.
2. Squeeze a small amount of the ointment onto your fingertip.
3. Gently rub the ointment into the area and along the stitches.
4. Do this 2-3 times a day for 1 week.

Signs of infection

As well as protecting your stitches, watch out for signs of infection such as:

- swelling
- increased redness around the wound
- pus or bleeding from the wound
- the wound feeling warm
- an unpleasant smell from the wound
- increasing pain
- a high temperature (fever)

If you have any of the symptoms above, see your GP or phone NHS24 on 08454 242424. You could also visit an NHS minor injuries unit.

Remember if in doubt get it checked