



## Monitoring Surgical Wounds for Infection

### What is a surgical wound and how do we manage it?

A surgical wound is an intentional cut made into the skin by a surgeon during an operation. At the end of the operation, the cut is closed, and this allows the skin edges to come together and heal. Sometimes stitches (sutures) are used to close your wound, but metal clips or staples may also be used. Sometimes the stitches that are used are underneath your skin so that you cannot see them and other times the sutures will be visible to you. Skin glue, steri – strips or tapes may also be used, either alone or in combination with sutures. A dressing may be applied on top of that.

The skin edges usually form a seal within a day or two of the operation. For some patients this can take longer and can vary depending on the operation performed. In some situations, it is best for a surgical wound to remain open (not stitched) and it heals from the base of the wound up. If this is the plan for your wound, you will receive specific information from your surgical, nursing and or midwifery team prior to being discharged home.



Early signs are redness and swelling around the wound. Warm to touch, pain with / or without yellow / green discharge

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### Further Information

We endeavor to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, in the first instance, raise these with the Matron, Senior Nurse or Manager on duty.

If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Experience Team on 01932 723553 or email [asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net](mailto:asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net). If you remain concerned, the team can also advise upon how to make a formal complaint.

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## More Information

You can find out more about surgical wound infections in the Guideline on the Prevention and Treatment of Surgical Site Infections published by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence.

This can be found online at: <https://www.nice.org.uk/>

If you have any further questions you can contact:

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Information provided by Public Health England.  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england>

## How will my wound be dressed?

Not all surgical wounds need dressings. The purpose of a dressing when applied is to:

- Absorb any leakage from the wound
- Provide ideal conditions for healing
- Protect the area until the wound is healed
- Prevent stitches or clips catching on clothing.

Should your wound require ongoing dressings when you are discharged home, the ward will give you a limited supply of dressings to take with you. If needed, you can then obtain more dressings from either your GP, District Nurse, Midwife, or local pharmacy. If you have skin glue, your nurse will inform you. Although the glue is waterproof, try to keep the wound dry for about 5 days. The glue usually peels off in 5-10 days.

## Will my stitches or clips need removal?

Most types of stitches, clips or staples must be removed by a nurse or doctor, but some stitches don't need to be removed because they dissolve. If you are told you need to have stitches removed, the nurse and/or midwife will give you a letter for your practice nurse and you will need to arrange an appointment for your practice nurse to do this. If you are house bound the nurse or midwife will arrange for a community nurse / midwife for a visit to your home. In some cases, special skin glue can be used on its own or in combination with stitches.









