



Care of minor lacerations and abrasions

Your child presented at our emergency department today with a minor laceration or abrasion. The area has been cleaned and examined and no treatment is required.

A dressing is not required, however if there is a likelihood of your child scratching or picking at the area, a dry dressing can be applied.

Important information:

- Please keep the area clean by washing and showering daily and patting dry as normal.
- Avoid activities that involve dirty play areas such as sandpits and muddy areas.

Please observe the area for signs of infection which include:

- fever
- redness at the site
- swelling
- increased pain
- discharge from the site – pus or a smelly ooze.

If you notice any of the above signs of infection or you have concerns, take your child to the GP or your local emergency department.

Wound healing and scarring

Scars form as a normal part of healing whenever the skin is damaged. All cuts will heal with a scar, however, the scar will be less noticeable if good care is given to the wound when it is healing.

During the first six to eight weeks after the injury, the scar will change from a thick, red raised scar to a thinner, paler, more flexible one. Scars can take up to two years to fully mature. The final appearance of the scar depends on several factors including the extent of the original wound, inherited skin qualities and how well the scar was looked after.

How to look after your scar

Scar massage

After the sutures have been removed from a wound, or around two to four weeks after the injury, scar massage can be performed. This should be done for five to ten minutes, twice a day. Do not massage any scar that is open or looks infected.

For the first two to four weeks, massage should be done along the same direction as the incision. The pressure applied should be enough to change the colour of the scar from pink to pale, but should not be so firm that it is painful.

After about four weeks, the scar can be massaged in all directions. Continue to massage daily until the scar is pale and thin.

Moisturising

Lotions such as Vitamin E cream, aloe vera, sorbolene or other un-fragranced products can be used to soften the scar and make massage easier.

Sun protection

It is very important to protect the scar from sun damage, which can permanently discolour the scar. You should always cover the scar with at least SPF 30 sunblock or zinc cream, wear clothing that covers the scar and stay in the shade.

Daily activity

It is important that your child avoids activities that will get the wound dirty.

Problem scars

A scar is a problem if it is painful or itchy, hard or raised, restricts movement or remains purple or red.

Risk factors for problem scars include certain skin types (especially dark, Mediterranean or Asian skin), previous problem scars, or post-operative wound complications such as poor healing (greater than three weeks) or infection.

You should contact your GP if you are concerned that your child's scar is not healing as expected.