

Patient Education Handout: Sutures

- Sutures are one method that may be used to close an open wound. Sutures may be absorbable or non-absorbable. Non-absorbable sutures will need to be removed by your health care provider.
- You received an anesthetic agent to numb a specific area of your body so the wound could be closed without causing pain.
- The numbing effects will wear off in approximately 4 to 6 hours.
- The area around the wound may appear and feel swollen. This can be due to both the injury and the anesthetic agent that was used. This will slowly resolve as the anesthetic agent is absorbed by the body.
- The skin around wound may appear pale or white in color. This will resolve as the anesthetic agent is absorbed.
- Take care not to re-injure the area where the anesthetic agent was used as you may not feel anything at the site until the numbing effects of the anesthetic agent wear off.
- As the anesthetic agent wears off, you may experience pain at the site and may take an oral analgesic (such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen) as directed by your health care provider.

You may take:

- Acetaminophen ____ mg to ____ mg every ____ to ____ hours for ____ day(s) as needed
- Ibuprofen ____ mg to ____ mg every ____ to ____ hours for ____ day(s) as needed
- A dressing may have been placed over the sutures if the wound continues to bleed or to keep it clean.
- Keep the dressing in place for the first 24-48 hours and then leave the wound open to the air.
- Keep the wound clean and dry for the first 24-48 hours.
- Do not soak the wound, showering is acceptable.
- Watch for signs and symptoms of infection (pus, fever, increased pain and redness, red streaks near the wound, increased swelling, opening of the wound) and return to the clinic or seek care from another health care provider.
- Return to the clinic in ____ days for removal of your sutures.

