

# How to look after your wound

Date: \_\_/\_\_/\_\_

You've had surgery on the \_\_\_\_\_  
 You've got \_\_\_\_\_ stitches in place.

Dissolvable stitches   
 Non-dissolvable stitches

Book an appointment with your GP practice nurse to have non-dissolvable stitches removed in \_\_\_\_ days

## Removing dressings

Keep your dressing dry for about 48 hours.

You can then remove it. It helps to dampen it with warm water first. Do this gently.

If you have steri-strips under the main dressing you can get them wet. Let them peel off one by one over time. This should take about 2 weeks. If they are still there, you can remove them.

## How to take care of yourself

- take paracetamol for pain relief if needed (if you're not allergic). Avoid taking non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs. These includes aspirin and ibuprofen
- use an ice pack to help swelling and bruising
- after facial surgery, use extra pillows.
- after leg surgery, raise the leg
- protect your wound. This is important to help healing and reduce scarring.
- expect some oozing or bleeding from the wound. If you see bleeding, cover it with a clean cloth or gauze. Apply constant pressure for 15 to 20 minutes. This should stop the bleeding. If it does not stop, call the Dermatology department during opening hours. Out of hours, attend your nearest A&E
- contact your GP if there is persistent pain and redness. This may mean there is the wound is infected

Also, see 'How can I look after my scar?' at [www.imperial.nhs.uk/our-services/dermatology/patient-information](http://www.imperial.nhs.uk/our-services/dermatology/patient-information)

## What to avoid

- driving on the day of your surgery
- hot food or drinks for a few hours after procedures near the lips, nose, or chin
- alcohol and smoking. Your surgeon can tell you for how long
- soaking the wound in water
- hard exercises and heavy lifting, until the stitches are removed
- flying (especially abroad) for 1 week. You can check this with your surgeon.

## Who to contact for more information or in an emergency

Your GP or GP practice nurse, or the hospital where you had the procedure:

Charing Cross Hospital	020 3313 5338 (nurses)	020 3311 7103/7106 (secretaries)
Hammersmith Hospital	020 3313 2668 (nurses)	020 3313 3264/2365/2402 (secretaries)
St Mary's Hospital	020 3312 1299 (nurses)	020 3312 1083/1194/7992 (secretaries)