

Wound care at home

Gunshot wound

Keep the wound clean and dry. If your bandage becomes wet or dirty, replace it. Otherwise, leave it on for the first 24 hours.

Clean the wound every day:

After removing the bandage, wash the area with soap and water.

You may shower as usual after the first 24 hours, but do not soak the area in water (no tub baths or swimming) until after you follow up with your doctor.

If it starts bleeding, cover with clean pad or towel and apply firm direct pressure without letting go for five full minutes. This gives time for a clot to form. If this does not stop the bleeding, come back to the hospital for help.

Follow up:

Come back for a wound check when we schedule you.

Most skin wounds heal within ten days. But sometimes even when you do your best, they still get infected. Check every day for signs of infection. Call your doctor right away if you notice:

- Increased drainage or bleeding from the wound that won't stop.
- Redness in or around the wound.
- Foul odor or pus coming from the wound.
- Increased swelling around the wound.
- Fever above 101°F or shaking chills.

A note about bullets:

Bullets do their damage when they are first shot. Once a bullet or a piece of a bullet stops inside you, it usually isn't a problem. Unlike what they show on TV, bullets don't need to be removed all the time. In fact, taking out a bullet or its fragments may cause more damage than leaving it alone.

Wound care at home

Stab wound

Keep the wound clean and dry. If your bandage becomes wet or dirty, replace it. Otherwise, leave it on for the first 24 hours.

Because a stab wound is deep, it does not get stitches. This is to help with infection and let the hole drain. As a result, blood may ooze from the opening during the first 24 hours.

Clean the wound every day:

After removing the bandage, wash the area with soap and water. Use a wet Q-tip to loosen and remove any blood or crust that forms.

You may remove the bandage and shower as usual after the first 24 hours, but do not soak the area in water (no swimming or tub baths) until after you follow up with your doctor.

If it starts bleeding, cover with clean pad or towel and apply firm direct pressure without letting go for five full minutes. This gives time for a clot to form. If this does not stop the bleeding, come back to the hospital for help.

Follow up:

Come back for a wound check when we schedule you.

Most skin wounds heal within ten days. But sometimes even when you do your best, they still get infected. Check every day for signs of infection. Call your doctor right away if you notice:

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Wound care at home

Sutures, stitches, staples and Steri-Strips

Keep the wound clean and dry.

If you were given a bandage, you may change it daily as follows: After removing the bandage, wash the area with soap and water. After cleaning, put on a fresh bandage.

You may remove the bandage to shower as usual after the first 24 hours, but do not soak the area in water (no tub baths or swimming) until the sutures are removed.

Follow up:

If stitches or staples are in place, it is important to keep your appointment to have them taken out. If they are left in place too long, it can cause scars or skin problems.

If Steri-Strips were applied, they will usually fall off by themselves after 10 to 12 days.

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- Redness in or around the wound.
- Foul odor or pus coming from the wound.
- Fever above 101°F or shaking chills.