Suture Care

Hilliard Pediatrics, Inc. - Dr. Tim Teller, MD

Introduction

The following is our office's specific instructions for taking care of sutures ("stitches") if they have been needed to close a cut. Sutures ("stitches") can be dissolvable (do not to be removed later) or non-dissolvable (do need to be removed later). You will be told when they are placed whether the sutures ("stitches") will need to be removed.

We Recommend

1. Clean the area with ½ strength hydrogen peroxide (mix equal amounts of over-the-counter hydrogen peroxide and water together) twice each day for as long as the sutures ("stitches") are still there.
2. Apply over-the-counter Neosporin® (antibacterial) ointment two or three times a day for the first day.
3. After the first day, keep the sutures ("stitches") uncovered unless the child is playing outside (and then cover the area with an elastic bandage (Band-Aid) just when playing outside).
4. Leave the sutured ("stitched") area open to the air as much as possible so that the edges of the cut can heal well. If the area remains covered, the area often does not heal as quickly.
5. If the stitches are not dissolvable and the stitches need to be removed, we recommend following-up based on where the cut happened.
   o Stitches on the **face** - 5-7 days after the stitches were placed
   o Stitches that are not on the face or on a joint - 7-10 days after the stitches were placed
   o Stitches **across a joint** (finger, knee, elbow, etc.) - 14-21 days after the stitches were placed

Note that some cuts that needed stitches heal slower than others and although the above information is a good guideline, occasionally we will find that the area has not healed and will need to reschedule the suture removal for another date.

Once the sutures ("stitches") have been removed, we recommend that if you would like to reduce the chance of the area leaving a prominent scar in the future to apply the over-the-counter **Mederma® Advanced Scar Gel** or **Mederma for Kids®** ointment according to the label instructions. This is available at many grocery stores and pharmacies.