

Caring For a Laceration

What is a laceration?

A laceration is a cut in the skin. It needs to be taken care of so that it does not get infected or pull apart.



How should it be cared for?

- Wash your hands with soap and water.
- Gently clean the cut with a washcloth and soap and water.
- Your child may take a brief bath or shower after 48 hours.
- A cut on the scalp or face may be washed with a mild soap or shampoo after 24 hours.
- If a cut is on the face, clean it gently with soap and water one to two times a day. This will help loosen dried blood.
- If a bandage was put on, the staff will tell you when to change it.

Special Information

- **Your child should not swim or soak the cut in water for 10 days.**
- Use only the ointment or cream the doctor or nurse told you to use.
- Give your child Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) to help with pain.
- If the cut is on the hand or foot, have your child raise up (elevate) the hand or foot on a pillow. This may help reduce pain and swelling.

Follow-up care

- If your child had stitches, they will need to be removed. The staff will tell you how long the stitches need to stay in place. Call the doctor for an appointment to remove the stitches.
- Do not let your child pick or pull on stitches, staples or dermabond.
- After the area is healed, use sunscreen with #30 SPF or higher when your child is out in the sun to prevent the scar from darkening.
- It will take up to one full year for a cut to become a finished scar.

ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has:

- Signs of infection at the cut such as increased redness, swelling, pus or drainage.
- More pain.
- Special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.