Incisional Care with Stitches

Read this handout to learn how to care for your incision if you have staples or sutures (stitches).

How to Clean
Wash your hands with warm, soapy water for 30 seconds and dry before cleaning wound. Use antibacterial soap and warm water over your incisions 1-2 times per day then pat dry.

Stiches can sometimes come out or the wound edges can come apart before stitches are removed. If that happens, continue wound care. Your wound will heal on its own so we will not place new stiches

Activity Restrictions
Until your wound heals, **avoid:**

- Swimming, hot tubs, and soaking the wound in a bath (gentle showers are okay)
- Going in lakes and ponds
- Too much stretching or exercising of the wound and areas close to the wound
- Exposing the wound to dust or dirt

When to Call
Call the clinic if you notice any of these symptoms:

- Redness around the wound
- Warmness around your wound that is warmer than the rest of your skin
- Increased swelling
- Increased pain
- Fever over 100.4°F
- Chills
- Thick smelly drainage that is yellow or green
  Bleeding from the incision that doesn't stop with pressure or raising the area

Who to Call
If you have questions, please contact your referring provider through MyChart or call your referring provider listed in your After Visit Summary or After Hospital Care Plan. For a list of UW Health Clinics, visit www.uwhealth.org/.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 3/2026 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing HF#8488