

# INFORMATION ON YOUR WOUND CLOSURE WITH STITCHES, STAPLES, GLUE OR TAPE



Image credit: CISSS des Laurentides

**PATIENT EDUCATION SHEET**

# INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR WOUND CLOSURE WITH STITCHES, STAPLES, GLUE OR TAPE

This education sheet contains information about how to care for your wound. Depending on the type of surgery or repair, the physician closed your wound with one of the following:

- Staples
- Tape
- Glue
- Stitches

During the first few days, the wound may be swollen, red and sensitive to the touch. After a few days, the swelling and redness will subside.

## What do I do with my wound?

- If you have a dressing, keep it on for \_\_\_\_\_ days.
- Wash your hands before touching the wound.
- When you remove the dressing, leave the wound open to air. If it's moist or there is discharge, apply a new dressing every 48 hours until the wound dries out.
- The care team will tell you when you can wash your wound. Generally, it is recommended that you wait at least 48 to 72 days after the surgery. To wash the wound, use tap water and a mild soap, then dry it well with a clean cloth.
- Do not scratch or rub the wound.
- Avoid immersing the wound in water (e.g.: swimming or taking a bath) until it has completely healed.
- Do not apply anything on the wound that has not been prescribed by your physician or recommended by the pharmacist, like rubbing alcohol, cream or ointment.



Image credit: Pixabay

## What should I do depending on the wound closure method used?

### Dissolving stitches

- Let the stitches fall off on their own and do not pull on them.
- If they have not fallen off after 10 days, consult the CLSC nurse.

### Stitches

- They will be removed 3 to 14 days after the surgery or repair.
- The CLSC nurse or your physician will remove them at your appointment. You must book your appointment through the routine health services access point (CLSC) and complete the form available at:
- In some exceptional situations, the stitches may be left in place longer.



## Staples

- They will be removed 3 to 14 days after the surgery.
- The CLSC nurse or your physician will remove them at your appointment.
- In some exceptional situations, the staples may be kept in place longer.

## Tape

- Let the tape fall off on its own (usually between 5 to 10 days).
- When the ends start to detach from the skin, you can cut the corners with a clean pair of scissors.
- If the tape is still in place after 10 days, wash your hands and remove it.

## Glue

- Let the glue fall off on its own (usually between 5 and 10 days after it was applied).
- Do not immerse it in water (e.g.: swimming or taking a bath) until the glue has come off on its own.

## **How can I relieve pain?**

- Take the prescribed medication while following the recommendations of the physician and pharmacist.
- Usually, if there is no contraindication, acetaminophen tablets (Tylenol®) are sufficient.
- If the wound is on your leg or arm, keep the limb raised to reduce swelling, while following your physician's instructions.
- Rest while waiting for the analgesic to relieve the pain.
- The pain should subside after 48 hours.

## **Other precautions**

### Personal hygiene

- Follow the medical instructions you were given.
- These are the general recommendations:
  - Avoid wetting the wound for 48 hours after the surgery or repair.
  - If the wound is well closed and there is no discharge, can you take a shower 48 hours after the wound has closed.
  - After taking a shower, you can let the wound dry in the open air. If you have to apply another dressing, the medical team will inform you.
  - If the dressing must be kept in place, avoid getting it wet. **It's important not to keep a wet dressing in place.**

- If you have to wash while the dressing is in place, make sure to protect it with a plastic bag. If this is not possible, wash yourself by hand.
- Baths, spas and pools must be avoided until the wound is well closed, scar formation is complete and there is no discharge. This usually takes 10 days.

### Walking and exercising

- You can return to your activities gradually according to your tolerance, the type of surgery and the type of wound.
- Avoid applying too much pressure on the wound for the first month.
- During the first week, gentle short-term activities like walking, are permitted, depending on your tolerance.
- Follow your physician's instructions about the activities that are permitted and not permitted during your convalescence.



### Driving

- Follow your physician's recommendations about driving.
- If you're taking strong painkillers like morphine, hydromorphone (Dilaudid®) or other medications that cause drowsiness, you must not drive.
  - In this is your situation, ask a family member or a friend to drive you or take a taxi or public transit.



## ■ Signs to watch for

In the days following your surgery or during wound repair, observe its progression.

**If you notice the following signs**, contact the surgery team or a nurse at Info-Santé by dialling 811, extension 1.

- Increased:
  - opening of the wound
  - swelling after 3 days
  - redness
  - wound sensitivity
- Persistent pain despite the analgesics prescribed
- Yellow or green discharge
- A bad odour from from the dressing (if applicable)
- A thick red raised scar that is sensitive and that lasts for more than 8 weeks
- Persistent redness or irritation for more than 5 days
- Heat sensation

## **If you notice the following signs, go to Emergency**

- Deterioration of your general condition (ex.: sore muscles, chills, general malaise or palpitations)
- Persistent and intense pain that is not relieved with the prescribed analgesics
- Red lines originating at the wound
- Darkening skin around the wound
- Prominent or complete opening of the wounds
- Abundant or persistent bleeding despite direct pressure for 10 minutes
- Signs of infection that increase quickly (e.g.: heat, pain, swelling and redness)

## **If you start to have fever**

If your oral temperature is above or at 37.5°C with none of the above-mentioned symptoms, call Info-Santé at 811. This service is available 24/7.

**CLSC in the Laurentides region:**

- |                          |                            |                                 |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | CLSC d'Antoine-Labelle     | 819-623-1228                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | CLSC d'Argenteuil          | 450-562-8581<br>or 450-562-3761 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | CLSC Lafontaine            | 450-432-2777                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | CLSC des Pays-d'en-Haut    | 450-229-6601                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | CLSC de Sainte-Agathe      | 819-326-3111                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | CLSC Jean-Olivier-Chénier  | 450-491-1233                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | CLSC Thérèse-De Blainville | 450-433-2777                    |

**CLSC in the Lanaudière region:**

- |                          |                   |                |
|--------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | CLSC Lamater      | 450-471-2882   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | CLSC Saint-Esprit | 1-888 256-0404 |

**Info santé: 811**

***We wish you a good stay and a speedy recovery!***

**[www.santelaurentides.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.santelaurentides.gouv.qc.ca)**

**Hôpital de Mont-Laurier: 1-819 623-1234**

2561, chemin de la Lièvre sud, Mont-Laurier (QC), J9L 3G3

**Hôpital de Saint-Eustache: 1-888-234-3837**

520, boul. Arthur-Sauvé, Saint-Eustache (QC), J7R 5B1

**Hôpital de Sainte-Agathe: 1-855-766-6387**

**Centre multiservices de santé et de services sociaux de Sainte-Agathe**

234, rue Saint-Vincent, Sainte-Agathe-des-Monts (QC), J8C 2B8

**Hôpital de Saint-Jérôme: 1-866-963-2777**

290, rue De Montigny, Saint-Jérôme (QC), J7Z 5T3

**Hôpital d'Argenteuil: 450-562-3761**

**Centre multiservices de santé et de services sociaux d'Argenteuil**

145, avenue de la Providence, Lachute (QC), J8H 4C7