

## PRETIBIAL LACERATION (LOWER LEG WOUNDS)

### PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

#### **Pretibial flap laceration:**

This is the name given to skin wounds over the shin. The skin is very thin here and the blood supply to the wound may not be very good. This means that:

- Surgical adhesive tapes (steristrips or 'paper stitches') are used rather than sutures (stitches), as these are the best way to close the skin without further harming the blood supply to it.
- The wound may be slow to heal. It may take several weeks.

Please tell us if you:

- Taking STEROIDS (e.g. prednisolone) or Warfarin.
- are DIABETIC.
- Have had a deep vein thrombosis (blood clot or DVT).
- Have poor circulation (blood flow) in your legs. As we may need to treat your wound differently.

You can help the wound to heal by following these instructions.

#### **The first two days:**

- Walk as little as possible and avoid prolonged standing such as cooking, washing dishes or ironing.
- Stay and rest in the house if you can.
- Keep your injured leg elevated e.g. on a stool or sofa, supported by pillows so that your ankle is higher than your hips. A footstool is usually not high enough to stop your leg swelling.

While you are resting: Move your toes, ankle & knee hourly for at least a minute, to reduce the risk of blood clotting in your leg (thrombosis or DVT) and to encourage the circulation to your leg.

Use your big toe to trace out the letters of the alphabet. Do this every hour. It is one way of checking that you have exercised your calf muscles for at least a minute.

#### **Until your wound has healed**

- Keep your leg elevated at night by raising the bottom-end of your mattress. Use a drawer, box or suitcase under the mattress at the foot of the bed, rather than just resting on pillows. This reduces swelling and the likelihood of infection.
- Keep your leg wound dry.

#### **A good diet will help the wound to heal**

- Eat fruit and vegetables & drink plenty of fluids. Consider multivitamins daily until the wound has healed if you are not able to eat a well-balanced diet.
- If you are **diabetic** you may need to monitor your blood sugars more closely whilst you are resting.

- **Stop smoking** – it can speed up the healing of your wound by improving your circulation. This improvement can happen within a few days.

**Symptoms of infection**

- Increasing pain that doesn't settle with elevation, especially if it wakens you during the night.
- Redness spreading up your leg.
- Fever or flu-like symptoms.
- Pus or smelly fluid coming from the wound

Itching can happen as the wound heals and is not necessarily a sign of infection.

If you are worried that your wound is becoming infected contact the Emergency Department.

<p><b>Information for health professionals</b></p> <p>Dressing type applied.....</p> <p>Suggested date of change.....</p> <p>Suggested date of steristrip removal.....</p> <p>Arrangements for review.....</p> <p>Contact number for queries...(0191) 569 9623</p>
--

**Useful websites**

- [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)
- [www.chsft.nhs.uk](http://www.chsft.nhs.uk)

**Contact details**

This information was correct at the time of printing. While the Trust makes every reasonable effort to keep its information leaflets up to date, very recent changes may not yet be reflected in the guidance and you should discuss this with the clinical staff at the time of your appointment.

Information is based on that available on [www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk).

Date of publication: Mar 2004  
 Reviewed: June 2012  
 Review due: June 2015  
 CGSG: Mar 2008  
 Ref: 157/08  
 © City Hospitals Sunderland