

Contact us

If after following this advice you still have concerns requiring urgent medical attention please contact your local hospital emergency department or call NHS 111.

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Birmingham Women's
and Children's
NHS Foundation Trust

Hand & Upper Limb Service
Department of Plastic Surgery

Dressings after small surgeries

HOME FOLLOW UP COVID-19

This leaflet is for you if your child has been treated for a fingertip injury and you have been advised to perform follow-up at home.

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CPADS:

CORONAVIRUS

PROTECT
YOURSELF
& OTHERS

On the day of the surgery

Your doctor will give you the details of what has been done during the surgery. Your child will leave theatre with either a bulky hand dressing or finger dressing.

The nursing staff will provide you with dressings to be used at home.

Early days

This dressing is to be kept clean and dry for 14 days. Showers and baths are to be avoided if possible. If your child needs to bathe or shower then you must make sure the dressing is kept completely dry and clean. A waterproof bag can be used to help keep the dressing dry.

14 days after surgery

If no allergy or contraindication, give your child a dose of Paracetamol or Ibuprofen one hour before removing the dressing.

Ensure your hands are thoroughly clean.

If you gently wet the tape and wait a few minutes for it to soften, then removal will be easier.

There will be multiple layers to the dressing. Carefully peel off each layer, one at a time. The last layer is a non-stick transparent dressing which can usually be removed without too much discomfort. If it is hard to remove, continue to wet it until it softens and peels off.

What to look out for when removing the dressing

Have a good look at your child's finger. Look for the following signs of infection:

- **OOZING FLUIDS**
- **STRONG SMELL**
- **REDNESS around the wound**

(Please note that a small amount of redness around the suture line/scar will be normal as it is a sign of healing.)

If you see any of these things place a temporary dressing over the wound to keep it clean and contact your GP or local hospital emergency department or NHS 111.

There may be small dry crusts/scabs around the wound. This is normal and they will go away with time as the skin continues to heal.

Any stitches will fall off by themselves between 10 days and 3 weeks approximately. Sometimes they can be a bit stubborn, continue moisturising and they should dissolve. In case there are any concerns follow the above advice.

What next?

Once you have removed the dressing and can see there are no signs of infection; gently wash the wound with soap and water. Dry the wound with a clean cloth and if the wound is dry, apply the dressing you have been supplied.

How to put on a finger dressing?

With clean hands apply the supplied dressing over the wound.

The dressing should be changed every 5-7 days until all stitches have dissolved.

Once all stitches have gone the wound can be left without a dressing, feel free to wash and bathe as normal.