

North Glasgow University Hospitals NHS Division
Clinical Procedure Manual
Section E – Surgical Management

5.4 Removal of Sutures

Objectives

By the end of this section you should know how to:

- Prepare patient for the removal of sutures;
- Prepare the necessary equipment;
- Safely remove all suture material from a wound, using an aseptic technique.

Indications for removal of sutures

- To remove suture material from a healed wound;
- To remove suture material from a specific area of an infected wound to allow drainage of the infective material;
- To remove a suture from a drain to permit removal.

Equipment

- Pair of sterile forceps
- Pair of sterile stitch cutter
- Pair of sterile gloves
- Protective apron
- Foil tray (to dispose sutures)

Procedure for uncovered wound

- Perform hand hygiene;
- Collect and prepare equipment;
- Wear protective apron;
- Ensure patient understands and consents to procedure;
- The patient, (if able), should have an immersion bath, or shower prior to commencement of the procedure;
- Following this, there is no need to further clean the wound;
- Ensure the patient is in a comfortable position, which allows access to the area of clips;
- Ensure the patient's dignity is preserved;
- Perform hand hygiene as per Division policy and wear sterile gloves;
- Using the forceps, lift the loose end of the suture, next to the knot;
- Pull gently upwards and away from the skin;
- Insert the stitch cutter under one end of the suture and cut;
- Gently pull the suture out, ensuring external suture material is **NOT** pulled through the wound;
- Continually assess the wound integrity throughout the procedure;
- If wound healing looks inconsistent, remove alternative sutures only and inform medical staff;
- Dispose of equipment as per Division Policy;
- Perform hand hygiene;
- Document procedure and report any abnormalities immediately.

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5.4 Removal of Sutures cont.

Procedure for covered wound

- Remove wound dressing and dispose of as per Division policy;
- Follow procedure for uncovered wound.

REFERENCES:

1. Hrouda, B. S. (2000) How to remove surgical sutures and staples. *Nursing* 30(2):54-55.
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3. Smith, L., Baker, F., and Stead, L. (1999) Practical procedures for nurses. Removal of sutures... no. 25.1. *Nursing Times* 95(9): insert-9,
4. Wiersema, L. (1994) Wound care and irrigations. in Perry, A. G. and Potter, P. A. *Clinical nursing skills and techniques* 3rd edn. St Louis, Mosby. Ch.42 pp 1036-1051.