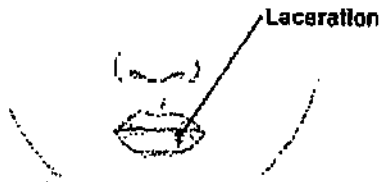


Lip and Mouth Laceration

A laceration is a cut through the skin. When the cut is on the outside of the lip, it may be closed with stitches, surgical tape, or sometimes skin glue. Cuts inside the mouth may be sutured or left open, depending on the size. When stitches are used in the mouth, they are usually the kind that dissolve.



Home care

The following guidelines will help you care for your laceration at home:

- Eat soft foods to reduce pain when chewing.
- If the cut is inside your mouth, clean the wound by rinsing your mouth after each meal and at bedtime with a mixture of equal parts water and hydrogen peroxide (do not swallow!). Or, you can use a cotton swab to apply hydrogen peroxide directly onto the cut.
- Mouth wounds can be painful when eating. You may use a local, over-the-counter numbing solution for pain relief. If this is not available, you may use any numbing solution for teething babies. You may apply this directly to the sores with a cotton-tip swab or with your finger.
- If the cut is on the outside of the lip and sutures were used, you may shower as usual after the first 24 hours, but do not put your head under water until the sutures are removed. After removing the bandage, wash the area with soap and water. Use a wet cotton swab to loosen and remove any blood or crust that forms. After cleaning, keep the wound clean and dry. Talk with your doctor before applying any antibiotic ointment to the wound. You may apply an adhesive bandage or leave the wound open.
- If surgical tape was used, keep the area clean and dry. If it becomes wet, blot it dry with a towel. Talk with your doctor before applying any antibiotic ointment to the wound. The surgical tape closures will usually fall off after about 5 days.
- If skin glue was used, do not scratch, rub, or pick at the adhesive film. Do not place tape directly over the film. Do not apply liquid, ointment, or creams to the wound while the film is in place. Do not clean the wound with peroxide and do not apply ointment. Avoid activities that cause heavy sweating until the film has fallen off. Protect the wound from prolonged exposure to sunlight or tanning lamps. You may shower as usual but do not soak the wound in water (no swimming).
- If you were given an antibiotic to prevent infection, do not stop taking this medication until you have finished the prescribed course or the doctor tells you to stop.
- The doctor may prescribe medications for pain. Follow the doctor's instructions for taking these medications. If you have chronic liver or kidney disease or ever had a stomach ulcer or GI bleeding, talk with your doctor before using these medicines.

Follow-up care

Follow up with your health care provider. Cuts in and around the mouth heal in about five days. However, even with proper treatment, a wound infection sometimes occurs. Therefore, check the wound daily for the warning signs listed below. Stitches should not be left in the face for more than five days; otherwise, permanent stitch marks may form. Unless told otherwise, you may remove surgical tape closures yourself after five days, if they have not already fallen off. If skin glue was used, the film will fall off by itself in 5–10 days.

When to seek medical advice

Call your health care provider right away if any of these occur:

- Increasing pain in the wound
- Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, or as directed by your health care provider
- Redness, swelling, or pus coming from the wound
- If sutures come apart or fall out or if surgical tape falls off before three days
- If the wound edges reopen
- Bleeding not controlled by direct pressure

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