Pretibial lacerations (Adult)

Information for patients

This leaflet can be made available in other formats including large print, CD and Braille and in languages other than English, upon request.

Pretibial lacerations are wounds (cuts) on your shin. The skin is very thin here and the blood supply to the wound may not be very good.

This leaflet gives you some general guidance. You should follow any advice given to you by the doctor or nurse.

As it is not like a simple cut:

- Steri-strips (wound closure strips) are used, rather than sutures, as these are the best way to close the skin in this area. They will need to be in place for 2 weeks.
- the wound may be slow to heal. It may take 10 weeks or more.
- this type of wound may need to be reviewed to check for infection and make sure it continues to heal. If you have difficulty getting to the Accident and Emergency Department, please tell one of the staff before you leave. We usually ask you to see your practice nurse (at your GP surgery) or arrange for the district nurse to visit in order to have your wound reviewed.

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

In the first 2 days:

- avoid standing for long periods
- avoid cooking, washing dishes or ironing
- only walk to and from the bathroom, bed or sofa
- keep the leg elevated (raised).

To elevate your leg, you must keep:

- your ankle higher than your kneecap
- your kneecap higher than your hips.
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While you are resting you should move your toes, ankle and knee for at least a minute, every hour to reduce the risk of thrombosis or DVT (blood clotting in your leg). You must seek medical attention if you get pain in your calf.

One way of checking you have exercised your calf muscles for at least a minute is to trace out the letters of the alphabet with your big toe every hour.

Until your wound has healed you should:

- keep your leg elevated, especially at night. This reduces swelling and the risk of infection.
- keep your leg dry and warm, cover legs with a light blanket while resting.

To help wound healing, you should:

- eat fruit and vegetables and drink plenty of fluids. If you are unable to eat a well-balanced diet consider taking multi-vitamins daily until your wound has healed.
- keep an eye on your blood sugar if you are a diabetic patient as this may be harder to control because of the change in your activity level
- stop smoking. Giving up smoking speeds up the healing of your wound. It improves the circulation to your wound and it can make a difference within 48 hours of stopping (see contact numbers at the end of this leaflet).

Signs which suggest infection are:

- increased pain that does not settle with elevation, especially if it keeps you awake during the night
- redness spreading up your leg
- fever (high temperature 99.5°F (37.5°C) or flu-like symptoms
- pus or smelly fluid coming from the wound.

If you are worried your wound is becoming infected, contact the Accident and Emergency Department (see contact numbers at the end of this leaflet).
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Contact numbers

University Hospital of North Tees

Accident and Emergency Department
telephone: 01642 382799
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Stockton and Hartlepool Stop Smoking Service
telephone: 01642 383819
Monday – Friday, 9.00 am – 5.00 pm
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This leaflet has been produced in partnership with patients and carers. All patient leaflets are regularly reviewed, and any suggestions you have as to how it may be improved are extremely valuable. Please write to the Quality Assurance Team, University Hospital of North Tees or email: patientinformation@nth.nhs.uk.

Comments, Concerns, Compliments or Complaints

We are continually trying to improve the services we provide.

We want to know what we’re doing well or if there’s anything which we can improve, that’s why the Patient Experience Team is here to help.

Our Patient Experience Team is here to try to resolve your concerns as quickly as possible. If you would like to contact or request a copy of our PET leaflet, please contact:

    telephone: 01642 624719
    Monday – Friday, 9.00 am – 4.00 pm
    Messages can be left on the answering machine and will be picked up throughout the day.

    freephone: 0800 092 0084
    Mobile: (can use text): 0779 506 1883
    Email: patientexperience@nth.nhs.uk

Out of hours if you wish to speak to a senior member of Trust staff, please contact the hospital switchboard who will bleep the appropriate person.

    telephone: 01642 617617
    24 hours a day, 7 days a week

The Patient Experience Team is available to discuss your concerns in person Monday – Friday, 1.30 pm – 4.30 pm.

Data Protection and use of patient information

The Trust has developed a Data Protection Policy in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1988 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. All of our staff respect this policy and confidentiality is adhered to at all times. If you require further information please contact the Head of Communications.

    telephone: 01642 624339 or www.gov.uk/data-protection

University Hospital of North Tees, Hardwick, Stockton-on-Tees. TS19 8PE
University Hospital of Hartlepool, Holdforth Road, Hartlepool. TS24 9AH

Telephone: 01642 617617 Fax: 01642 624089