

# LACERATION GUIDE

Rady Children's Hospital-San Diego

## What is a laceration?

A **laceration** is a wound that happens when skin or tissue is torn and cut.

There are different ways to treat lacerations based on their type, size, depth, and location.

## Types of laceration repairs

### Sutures

Stitches are needed to help close certain cuts.

Some stitches may dissolve on their own and others need to be removed.

### Dermabond

Skin glue is typically used to hold together cuts that are not too deep.

### Staples

Staples are commonly used for lacerations on the scalp to help the edges of the cut close and align.

### Steri strips

Adhesive skin closure strips help close the cut or protect and cover sutures.

***Your child's physician will determine the best way to treat your child's wound***

## What to expect

### Who repairs the laceration?

- Lacerations in children are frequently seen in the emergency department, and our medical team is experienced in repairing them.
- Plastic surgeons do not perform routine laceration repairs here in the emergency department.
- A surgeon may be consulted for complex lacerations when appropriate.

### How will my child's pain be managed?

- A topical numbing medication can be applied to minimize discomfort.
- If needed, additional numbing medication can be given as an injection.

### What options are available to help my child cope?

- When available, our Child Life team provides developmentally appropriate preparation and support.
- Medication may be used to help decrease anxiety.
- In unique circumstances, your child may require medications to help them sleep through the repair.



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## Tips for supporting your child

It is **normal** for your child to feel scared or nervous during their ED visit.

*Here are some helpful strategies to support your child:*

- Validate your child's feelings to help them feel heard.
- Provide honest and simple explanations about the procedure.
- Remind your child that the medication's job is to reduce pain by making their cut numb or "asleep" – They can have a job to help too by making sure the numbing medicine stays on!
- Come up with a coping plan for the procedure such as counting, taking deep breaths, or using distraction items during the repair to help them focus on something that will decrease stress.

## Frequently asked questions

### Will my child have a scar?

Scarring is part of the body's natural healing process. Scar tissue usually fades away in 6-12 months. After the wound is healed, it is important to protect it from the sun.

### What are the complications?

Although problems are rare, any procedure has risks.

Possible complications include infection, bleeding, scarring, or poor wound closure.

***Prior to discharge, our team will provide instructions on how to care for your child's wound after the repair***

