SUTURE CARE (STITCHES)
You have had a surgical procedure that required sutures (stitches) to close the wound. These will remain in the skin for a number of days, depending on their location and your surgeon’s discretion.

Instructions
- Follow directions for all your medications carefully.
- Do not drink alcohol while taking narcotic pain medications.
- No swimming for two weeks after suture removal.

Incision Care
- Keep the wound and sutures clean, dry and inspect daily for signs of infection.
- After 24 hours, wash the area gently with mild soap and water, unless instructed otherwise. Avoid soaking the area while sutures are in place.
- In general, baths may be resumed after the sutures are removed.
- You may be directed to apply a medication and dressing to the wound. Be sure to ask any questions about your care so that you can perform these dressings at home.

Appearance
- Dr. Wendel will decide on the appropriate type of suture(s) necessary for your procedure.
- Generally, one of three kinds of sutures is used:
  - Interrupted - small knots are used to close the wound
  - Over and Over - continuous, loop-like stitches
  - Subcutaneous (buried) - a hidden stitch under the skin that dissolves

When To Call
- If you have increased swelling or bruising.
- If swelling and redness persist after a few days.
- If you have increased redness along the incision.
- If you have severe or increased pain not relieved by medication.
- If you have any side effects to medications; such as, rash, nausea, headache, vomiting.
- If you have an oral temperature over 100.4 degrees.
- If you have any yellowish or greenish drainage from the incisions or notice a foul odor.
- If you have bleeding from the incisions that is difficult to control with light pressure.
- If you have loss of feeling or motion.

For Medical Questions, Please Call:
(615) 921-2100 Monday-Thursday 9:00 AM-5:00 PM and Fridays 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM. After hours and on weekends, the answering service will contact Dr. Wendel or the plastic surgeon on call.