This protocol is for trained CIP Paramedics only. If during assessment, procedure, or treatment the patient is found to have a medical emergency in need of hospital treatment, the CIP visit will be suspended, and local MCA protocols utilized.

Purpose: To provide guidelines for CIP paramedics to safely remove sutures and/or staples as approved by the MCA.

Aliases: Stitches, staples

1. Indications
   1. Request from a clinician to remove a known type of suture
2. Contraindications
   1. Signs of wound complications or infection
3. Equipment
   1. Forceps
   2. Suture scissors
   3. Staple remover
   4. Sterile gauze
   5. Sterile 0.9% sodium chloride solution
   6. Sterile wound strips
4. Procedure
   1. Plain suture removal (optional)
      1. Gently grasp the knot or the tail with forceps and raise it slightly
      2. Place the curved tip of the suture scissors directly under the knot or on the side, close to the skin
      3. Gently cut the suture and pull it out with the forceps
      4. Make sure all suture material is removed and placed on clean gauze
      5. Remove alternate sutures
      6. Assess the wound for dehiscence (edges of the wound do not meet)
         1. Absence of dehiscence
            1. Remove remaining sutures
            2. Apply sterile wound strips to prevent dehiscence
         2. Presence of dehiscence
            1. Do not continue to remove sutures
            2. Cover wound with sterile gauze saturated with sterile 0.9% sodium chloride solution
            3. Contact physician see CIP Medical Direction protocol
   2. Staple removal (optional)
      1. Place the lower jaw of the remover under a staple
      2. Squeeze the handles completely to close the device bending the staple in the middle and pulling the edges of the staple out of the skin
      3. Gently move the staple away from the incision site when both ends are visible
      4. Hold the staple remover over a sharps container, relax pressure on the handles, let the staple drop into the sharps container
      5. Remove alternate staples
      6. Assess the wound for dehiscence (edges of the wound do not meet)
         1. Absence of dehiscence
            1. Remove remaining staples
            2. Apply sterile wound strips to prevent dehiscence
         2. Presence of dehiscence
            1. Do not continue to remove staples
            2. Cover wound with sterile gauze saturated with sterile 0.9% sodium chloride solution
            3. Contact physician see CIP Medical Direction protocol
5. Documentation see CIP Documentation protocol
   1. Additionally:
      1. Date and time of removal
      2. Number of sutures or staples removed
      3. Dressings or adhesive wound strips applies
      4. Appearance of the incision