

**Michigan**  
**COMMUNITY INTEGRATED PARAMEDICINE**  
**Procedure**  
**SUTURE REMOVAL**

Initial Date November 13, 2020

Revised Date:

Section 11-35

*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

- I. Indications
  - a. Request from a clinician to remove a known type of suture
- II. Contraindications
  - a. Signs of wound complications or infection
- III. Equipment
  - a. Forceps
  - b. Suture scissors
  - c. Staple remover
  - d. Sterile gauze
  - e. Sterile 0.9% sodium chloride solution
  - f. Sterile wound strips
- IV. Procedure
  - a. Plain suture removal (optional)
    - i. Gently grasp the knot or the tail with forceps and raise it slightly
    - ii. Place the curved tip of the suture scissors directly under the knot or on the side, close to the skin
    - iii. Gently cut the suture and pull it out with the forceps
    - iv. Make sure all suture material is removed and placed on clean gauze
    - v. Remove alternate sutures
    - vi. Assess the wound for dehiscence (edges of the wound do not meet)
      1. Absence of dehiscence
        - a. Remove remaining sutures
        - b. Apply sterile wound strips to prevent dehiscence
      2. Presence of dehiscence
        - a. Do not continue to remove sutures
        - b. Cover wound with sterile gauze saturated with sterile 0.9% sodium chloride solution
        - c. Contact physician **see CIP Medical Direction protocol**
  - b. Staple removal (optional)
    - i. Place the lower jaw of the remover under a staple
    - ii. 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
    - iii. Gently move the staple away from the incision site when both ends are visible
    - iv. Hold the staple remover over a sharps container, relax pressure on the handles, let the staple drop into the sharps container

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- v. Remove alternate staples
- vi. Assess the wound for dehiscence (edges of the wound do not meet)
  - 1. Absence of dehiscence
    - a. Remove remaining staples
    - b. Apply sterile wound strips to prevent dehiscence
  - 2. Presence of dehiscence
    - a. Do not continue to remove staples
    - b. Cover wound with sterile gauze saturated with sterile 0.9% sodium chloride solution
    - c. Contact physician **see CIP Medical Direction protocol**
- V. Documentation **see CIP Documentation protocol**
  - a. Additionally:
    - i. Date and time of removal
    - ii. Number of sutures or staples removed
    - iii. Dressings or adhesive wound strips applies
    - iv. Appearance of the incision