You have required sutures today. Please read the following instructions so you know how to care for them:

1. Keep wound area dry for the first 24 hours.

2. Apply antibiotic ointment (e.g. Bacitracin) and a clean Band-Aid or dressing daily for 48 hours. After 2 days, you may leave the sutures uncovered. You may clean gently with mild soap and water or 1/2 strength hydrogen peroxide after 48 hours, to prevent crusting over suture knots.

3. You may shower if your provider gives permission but do not take a bath until the skin is healed. Change the dressing after your shower.

4. Never leave a wet dressing on your sutures as this may promote infection.

Watch for signs of infection:
- Increasing redness, tenderness or warmth around the suture site
- Unusual swelling around the site
- Appearance of pus or any red streaks
- Fever

If you develop any of the above signs or symptoms of infection, please call Health Services at 401-863-3953 for advice, or an appointment to be evaluated.

5. When sutures are removed depends on how well the wound is healing and where it is located. Sutures are usually removed from the face in 3 to 5 days; the torso in 7 to 10 days; the hands and feet in 7 to 10 days, and scalp in 7 days. The provider who places the sutures will tell you when to have them removed.

6. Call for a provider appointment to remove your sutures.

STERI-STRIPS
Steri-strips are pieces of adhesive material that can be used in some surgical procedures to help the edges of an incision grow together. They have several advantages, including low rates of infection, speed of application, no need for local anesthesia, and no need for special removal.

Steri-strips begin to curl and peel away from the body, usually within five to seven days after application. They should be pulled off after two weeks if they have not already fallen off. Steri-strips, however, have two disadvantages: they are not as precise as sutures in bringing the edges of an incision into alignment; and they cannot be used on areas of the body that are hairy or that secrete moisture, such as the palms of the hands or the armpits.

Incisions closed with Steri-strips should be kept dry for about four to five days. If the incision gets wet accidentally, it must be dried at once. Patients with incisions on the face, hands, or arms may be able to take showers or tub baths as long as they are able to hold the affected area outside the water. Patients with incisions in other parts of the body can usually take sponge baths.