What is it?

A laceration is a wound produced by a relatively sharp object causing a jagged tearing of the skin tissue. Because the skin is cut through its full thickness, stitches are often required.

What can you do?

After you have received stitches, there are measures you can take to help the healing process and relieve discomfort:

• Keep the wound clean and dry to promote healing and prevent infection.

• Elevate the wounded part to prevent throbbing and to decrease wound swelling.

• If the wound has been left open to the air clean it once or twice a day with diluted hydrogen peroxide for the first day only, then clean with soap and water on the following days.

• If the wound has been covered with a bandage or dressing, do not remove it for 48 hours, unless it becomes wet or covered with pus or blood. (Should that occur, redress the wound as directed).

• Take ibuprofen or acetaminophen if needed for pain.

• Return to Student Health on ________________ to have your stitches removed.

• Avoid swimming, baths, or soaking the wound until sutures are removed. You may take showers after 24 hours.

Consult health care personnel:

• if there is increasing redness or pus draining from the wound.

• if there are red streaks extending from the wound.

• if there is increasing pain, tenderness or local heat at the wound site.

• if there is bleeding which soaks through the bandage and does not stop.

• if you have a temperature of 100˚F. (38˚C.) or higher.

• any time you are unsure about what to do.

Afterwards:

• Healing continues for 6-12 months.

• Minimize scarring by avoiding infections, protecting the wound from reinjury, and keeping the wound out of direct sunlight and/or covering it with sunscreen (once healed).