

## **Internal Suturing and My Profound Stupidity**

Back when I had the clips removed, a little bit of the internal suturing was sticking out. My theory was that over the weeks it would either dissolve or drop off; 5 and half weeks later when it was still there, I figured that giving it a little tug might just help it come away.

Please note that during this time, because I was thoroughly aware it was in some way possibly attached to the inside, I kept it clean and dressed most of the time to avoid the risk of infection. I didn't want anything getting inside that may be harmful.

Anyway, I gave it a tug and instead of coming off, I basically pulled out more of the suturing from inside – it's a VERY strong floss like material by the way and is usually a creamy-white colour. You would have thought that would have been enough to send up warning bells, but due to my profound stupidity I was still convinced I could pull it off... I made it bleed instead and that is when I realised I had done the damage.

I was worried, mostly because I didn't want it to get infected, I didn't even want to entertain what horrors might unfold for the fusion if I developed an infection. Had my sister check, wash and dress it, then worried some more (she's a nurse). Eventually, I emailed my consultant's clinical nurse to tell her what I had done before I went bed and hoped by some miracle she would reply on her day off.

By morning the throbbing hadn't stopped and I was still worried so I rang my GP, she couldn't get me in to a wound clinic that day so advised me to go straight to Accident and Emergency. Whilst sorting that, my consultant's nurse had (to my sheer relief and luck) replied, and reassured me that it was common for some of the internal suturing to come out with the clips – that is why they had discharged me with scissors too, but the nurse who had removed them didn't know to do that. She confirmed that they would just cut it off and I would (should) be fine.

Think it was my quickest trip ever to A&E! For the first time ever in history, it was quiet on a Friday afternoon, I was triaged within 10 minutes and saw a Dr about 15 minutes later. The Dr cut it off, then put paper stitches over the wound – it bled but not much. A sterile dressing and reassurance later, I was on my way home. I booked an appointment with the wound care clinic as a follow up and sent prayers to the sky that it wasn't infected.

I spent the weekend making sure the wound was clean and changed the dressing after it got wet. Monday came, and the clinic refused to remove the stiches and instead put more on – I don't actually know why, because it my opinion it was fine, but I did note blood on the stitches when I changed them the next day (they got wet) so I guess she had a point. Later in the week though it was all nicely healed alongside the rest of the incision at long last, so I am now very pleased to report that all stitches, dressings etc. are off at 6 weeks post-op.