

A Program to Address Typical Skin Picking
Pittsburgh Partnership

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1. *Tell the child that you want to help her sore to heal. Do not talk about the “picking”.*

2. *Tell him that when the sore heals you will celebrate with a special reward. This reward should be motivating, but not too motivating; rewards that are too motivating can create anxiety. Also there is the risk that an older, more clever individual will deliberately create wounds to heal to earn the reward!*

Be prepared to offer the same reward on multiple occasions.

- *Try to anticipate the situations when picking tends to occur, and before he starts to pick, remind him that he is working to gain this reward.*
- *Once the reward is earned, offer it weekly (for very young or low functioning children or for severe pickers) or monthly for “no new sores.”*
- *If a reward must be withheld because of a continued open sore, express your disappointment that the reward was not earned and your optimism that he can achieve it very soon. Most superficial sores show considerable healing in a matter of 2-3 days if there is no picking going on.*

3. *Tell her that you have medicine to help the sore to heal.*

- *Plastic surgeons use Polysporin [Bacitracin/Polymyxin] Ointment on healing wounds to minimize scarring. Also, it has the effect of keeping the area soft, slippery, and less tempting or less easy to pick.*
- *Use Polysporin ointment on the sore as frequently as possible (every ½ - 1 hour while awake) and apply thoroughly at bedtime.*

4. *Use a dressing or some other barrier where anatomically possible. Your purpose is to make the picking less convenient.*

- *The ideal dressing is NOT airtight but is difficult to remove. On arms and legs this can be gauze wrap covered with cling wrap.*
- *If there is no evidence of picking during sleep leave the area open to the air. Socks or mittens taped at the wrist have been used for nighttime picking.*
- *Other covers have been effective barriers: “Onesies”; tight fitting clothes e.g. Scuba suit or leotard for trunk; Panty hose for legs; can be cut and redesigned for arms or scalp.*