



Basic Wound Care Instructions

General Instructions:

Care For Your Open Wound, or Draining Abscess

Careful attention will help your wound heal smoothly. Keep the area clean and protected from further injury. Gentle heat will increase blood flow, and speed healing. A warm, wet towel applied for 20 minutes several times a day is enough. Be careful not to burn yourself. Do not let your wound dry out. This could damage the delicate new cells that are growing. Cleaning your hands and the surrounding skin with mild soap and warm water is usually enough. A daily shower with all bandages removed will help prevent buildup of debris that would harbor the growth of more bacteria. Your doctor will tell you if full sterile technique is necessary.

Wet to Dry Dressings:

Three times a day (or as directed by your provider) remove bandages and clean the wound. You may shower at this time. Gently clean out all loose debris with a Q-tip or washcloth.

If your wound is not draining much (light drainage), moisten a piece of gauze with saline, and gently place gauze into the deepest part of the wound.

Do not pack tightly, but do keep the wound edges from touching, so that the wound can heal from the inside out.

If wound is draining a lot, pack with dry gauze to absorb excess moisture.

For copious drainage, sanitary pads can be a very absorbent, cushiony, and inexpensive dressing.

Wound drainage may be clear, cloudy, pink, yellow, dark red, or brown. It should gradually become clearer, and be produced in smaller amounts. A small amount of blood is normal.

No tub bathing, immersion or swimming while open wound is present.

Possible Problems

Call your doctor if:

- Any signs of infection are present, such as spreading redness on the skin surrounding wound, swelling, and hot to touch or purulent wound drainage
- You have a fever over 101.5 degrees F
- You have an increase in pain.



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Telephone numbers to call with Problems or Questions

Wound Care Clinic: Department 290

Mon – Fri, 8:00 a.m. to 4 p.m.
(408) 851-2227

Medical Offices Call Center

Mon – Fri, After Business Hours, Weekends and Holidays
(408) 554-9800

Emergency Department

Open 24 hours
(408) 851-5300