

DO NOT FORGET



ALWAYS follow your health care provider's instructions. Keep your bandages on and change or reinforce your bandage if it becomes loose.

Contact your health care provider:



- If you believe that you have an infection, contact them right away, and don't wait
- If you have uncontrolled bleeding from your wound
- Your wound is deep or has jagged edges
- You were cut by a rusty or dirty object and have not had a tetanus shot in the past 5 years
- There is something in your wound that will not easily rinse out
- If you notice signs of infection: an increase in redness, warmth, swelling, drainage, odor, pain and/or fever, chills, nausea or vomiting
- If you are diabetic and have an unusual increase in blood glucose
- Your wound just will not heal

Notes _____

This brochure has been brought to you by the Association for the Advancement of Wound Care (AAWC) through the volunteer support and clinical expertise of the AAWC Public Awareness Task Force. It is intended for educational purposes only. Contact your health care provider for medical advice and care.

OUR MISSION

AAWC's mission is to advance the care of people with and at risk for wounds.

DID YOU KNOW?

AAWC has a variety of membership and contribution options. Categories of membership exist for healthcare providers and their facilities, but also for wound care patients and their caregivers. In fact, patients, lay-caregivers and layperson advocates receive free lifetime memberships to AAWC!

WOUND CARE PATIENTS NEED A VOICE!

Join today, and encourage your healthcare team to become professional members. For information, to join or to make a charitable contribution, please call or visit:

Toll Free: 866-AAWC-999

Outside of the US: 610-560-0484

www.aawconline.org

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Reference: CDC Features: Wash Your Hands 2/29/16
<http://www.cdc.gov/features/handwashing/>

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COMMON QUESTIONS

HOW CAN YOU PREVENT INFECTION?

Did you know there are germs all over our skin?



Our skin is covered with them, and this is normal! Having germs on your skin, even in a wound, does not mean you have an infection. The number and type of germs, as well as your ability to fight them off, will determine whether or not an infection will occur.



Skin is the body's 'armor'. This 'armor' can protect against germs entering your body. Having an open wound, no matter how small, increases your risk for an infection because it provides germs with a way to get into your body. It is important to keep your home, your clothes and your body as clean as possible to prevent an infection.

What is a wound infection?

Your wound is considered infected when the amount or type of germs in your wound is too much for your body to fight. An infection can slow healing or make your wound worse.

Infections can be mild to severe: A wound infection can be mild and confined to the wound itself. If untreated, some infections can become serious, causing a "whole body" illness. No two infections are the same, so if you see and feel the signs of an infection, tell your health care provider right away. The best course of infection treatment will be prescribed by your health care provider.

What does a wound infection look and feel like?

- Increase in pain that doesn't go away
- Increased redness and warmth in and around the wound
- Increased swelling around the wound
- Increase in wound drainage and odor
- Fever, chills, nausea or vomiting
- Wound may slow or stop healing
- If you are diabetic, an unusual increase in blood glucose (finger stick)



Is my wound infected?

Inflammation, mild redness and warmth, is a normal response your body has to dealing with trauma and can sometimes be confused with infection. Your health care provider understands the difference and will help identify if your wound has become infected and determine the correct treatment to fight the infection.

Be sure to tell your health care provider about ALL of your medicines: prescription, over the counter and dietary supplements



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention say "Handwashing is easy to do and it's one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of many types of infection and illness..." They even teach us how to do it:



- **Wet** your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap
- **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails
- **Scrub** your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice
- **Rinse** your hands well under clean, running water
- **Dry** your hands using a clean towel or air dry them

To reduce the risk of infection when changing your wound bandages:

- Wash hands with soap and water before and after dressings are changed
- Wear disposable gloves and change them if they become soiled
- Clean any equipment/surfaces that will be used
- Always follow your healthcare provider's instructions on the use of supplies and bandages