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Wound Care

How to care for wounds at home

When to contact a clinician

Initially, some mild redness directly around the wound is a normal part of healing, but seek medical care if there is any of the following:

- Red "streaking" spreading out from the wound.
- Increased pain or swelling
- Difficulty moving the affected area.
- Pus or odorous wound drainage
- Warmth around the wound
- Fever higher than 100.4 degrees
- Poor healing, gaping wounds, bite injuries, etc.

Deep or gaping wounds may need stitches or other wound care from a medical professional. Some bite injuries may also require special attention.

Treatment

Immediately after the injury, wash thoroughly with clean water and mild soap. Remove any visible dirt or debris from the wound. Apply gentle pressure to stop bleeding.

For burn wounds, run cool water over the area or apply a cool, wet cloth. *If blisters form, do not pop or drain.*

Apply a thin layer of bacitracin antibiotic ointment or white petroleum to the wound. Cover with a bandage.

Clean area twice daily with soap and water, and apply a new bandage and ointment after cleaning. *There is no need to use hydrogen peroxide or alcohol for cleaning.*

Continue this care until wound is fully healed.



Tetanus immunization

Tetanus is an uncommon but serious infection that can occur after a skin injury. It is recommended that all individuals receive a series of three tetanus vaccinations, usually given during infancy, and a booster shot every 10 years. Some puncture wounds or other dirty wounds may require a tetanus booster if it has been more than five years since the last tetanus shot.

MEMBERS: As always, your provider is just a phone call or text message away. It's better to be safe than sorry. Reach out if you are worried or if this protocol isn't helping.