

Meet People Where They Are

A Harm Reduction Approach to Wound Care

People who use substances experience high rates of skin and wound infections

Almost 75% of people who use substances have had a wound



People who are stigmatized often delay seeking medical care because of negative past experience

What can you do?

- **Actively** listen to the person and address their needs
- **Assess pain** and provide enough **pain management**
- Take the time to **teach** the person about their wound, including signs and symptoms of infection
- Ask about **individual** needs and concerns
- Allot enough time to provide good care. **Avoid rushing**
- If possible and appropriate, **send a take-away bag of wound care** supplies with teaching to support people in caring for their wounds

OK: Watch



Caution: Get Checked



Stop: Get Urgent Care



Care for the wound and **monitor**:

- Keep wound **clean** and **covered**
- Wash your hands before care
- Clean wound every day by rinsing well with tap water or saline
- Avoid scrubbing or touching the wound- it can slow healing
- Cover wound with a bandage
- Change bandage if it is wet or dirty

See a healthcare provider to **check for infection**.

If the skin or wound changes:

- **Hot:** feels hot
- **Painful:** hurts more
- **Red:** edges are red or bleeding
- **Odour:** smells bad or different
- **Fluid:** fluid or green/yellow pus
- **Bigger:** wound size or red skin
- **Swollen:** more puffy

Get **urgent healthcare** if:

- **Fever-** chills or temperature above 38 degrees Celsius
- **Hot and red skin-** bigger than 2cm around wound (size of a nickel)
- **Red streaks-** painful reddish lines coming from wound or red stripes up skin. *may be hard to see on darker skin tones

Antibiotic tips

- Only take antibiotics that are prescribed for you
- Do not share prescribed antibiotics
- Do not save your antibiotics for a different infection

Untreated severe wounds can cause serious complications like **amputation** and **blood infection (sepsis)**

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- **Hot:** feels hot
- **Painful:** hurts more
- **Red:** edges are red or bleeding
- **Odour:** smells bad or different
- **Fluid:** more liquid or green/yellow pus
- **Bigger:** wound or red skin is growing
- **Swollen:** more puffy

Get **urgent** healthcare if you notice any:

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