Foreign Body

A foreign body is something in your body that should not be there. This may have been caused by a puncture wound or other injury. Puncture wounds become easily infected. This happens when *bacteria* (germs) get under the skin. Rusty nails and similar foreign bodies are often dirty and carry germs on them.

TREATMENT

- A foreign body is usually removed if this can be easily done right after it happens.
- Sometimes they are left in and removed at a later surgery. They may be left in permanently if they will not cause later problems.
- The following are general instructions in caring for your wound.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- A dressing, depending on the location of the wound, may have been applied. This may be changed once per day or as instructed. If the dressing sticks, it may be soaked off with soapy water or hydrogen peroxide.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- Be aware that your body will work to remove the foreign substance. That is, the foreign body may work itself out of the wound. That is normal.
- You may have received a recommendation to follow up with your physician or a specialist. It is very important to call for or keep follow-up appointments in order to avoid infection or other complications.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- There is redness, swelling, or increasing pain in the wound.
- You notice a foul smell coming from the wound or dressing.
- Pus is coming from the wound.
- An unexplained oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C) develops, or as your caregiver suggests.
- There is increasing pain in the wound.

If you did not receive a tetanus shot today because you did not recall when your last one was given, make sure to check with your physician's office and determine if one is needed. Generally for a “dirty” wound, you should receive a tetanus booster if you have not had one in the last five years. If you have a “clean” wound, you should receive a tetanus booster if you have not had one within the last ten years.

If you have a foreign body that needs removal and this was not done today, make sure you know how you are to follow up and what is the plan of action for taking care of this. It is your responsibility to follow up on this.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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