Gunshot Wounds

Gunshot wounds can cause severe bleeding, damage to soft tissues, fractures (broken bones), and wound infections. The amount of damage depends on the location of the injury, and the velocity and type of bullet. Care must be taken to avoid complications and insure satisfactory recovery.

Many times, these wounds can be treated by cleaning the wound area and bullet tract and applying a sterile dressing. If the injury includes a fracture, a splint may be applied to prevent movement. Antibiotic treatment may be prescribed to help prevent infection. You may require surgery if there are internal injuries or bullet fragments remain.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Rest your injury.
- Keep it elevated to reduce pain and swelling.
- If you have numbness or weakness in the affected limb, this may be due to damage to underlying nerve and tendon structures.
- Follow-up exam within 2-3 days or as directed is usually needed to recheck the injury. **Although there may be lead bullet fragments left in your wound, this will not cause lead poisoning**. Bullets or bullet fragments are not removed if they are not causing a problem. Removing them could cause more damage. If the bullets/fragments are superficial they might work their way closer to the skin and then they can be removed in the office with local anesthetic

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF YOU HAVE:

- Chills or fever.
- Fainting, shortness of breath, or severe chest or abdominal pain.
- Redness, swelling, pain, or pus draining from the wound.

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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