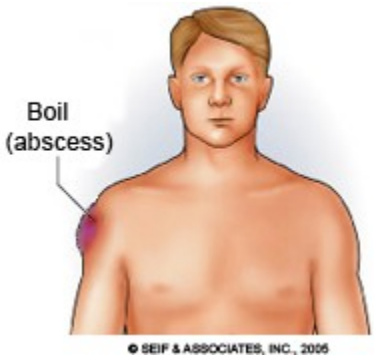
Abscess/Boil
(Furuncle)

An *abscess* (boil or furuncle) is an infected area that contains a collection of pus.



SYMPTOMS
Signs and symptoms of an abscess include pain, tenderness, redness, or hardness. You may feel a moveable soft area under your skin. An abscess can occur anywhere in the body.

TREATMENT
An incision (cut by the caregiver) may have been made over your abscess so the pus could be drained out. Gauze may have been packed into the space or a drain may have been looped thru the abscess cavity (pocket). This provides a drain that will allow the cavity to heal from the inside outwards. The abscess may be painful for a few days, but should feel much better if it was drained. Your abscess, if seen early, may not have localized and may not have been drained. If not, another appointment may be required if it does not get better on its own or with medications.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- Keep the skin and clothes clean around your abscess.
- If the abscess was drained, you will need to use gauze dressing ("4x4") to collect any draining pus. These dressing typically will need to be changed 3 or more times during the day.
- The infection may spread by skin contact with others. Avoid skin contact as much as possible.
- Good hygiene is very important including regular hand washing, cover any draining skin lesions, and don't share personal care items.
- If you participate in sports do not share athletic equipment, towels, whirlpools, or personal care items. Shower after every practice or tournament.
- If a draining area cannot be adequately covered:
  - Do not participate in sports
  - Children should not participate in day care until the wound has healed or drainage stops.
- If your caregiver has given you a follow-up appointment, it is very important to keep that appointment. Not keeping the appointment could result in a much worse infection, chronic or permanent injury, pain, and disability. If there is any problem keeping the appointment, you must call back to this facility for assistance.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:
- You develop increased pain, swelling, redness, drainage, or bleeding in the wound site.
- You develop signs of generalized infection including muscle aches, chills, fever, or a general ill feeling.
- You or your child have an oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C).
- Your baby is older than 3 months with a rectal temperature of 100.5º F (38.1° C) or higher for more than 1 day.

See your caregiver as directed for a recheck or sooner if you develop any of the symptoms described above. Take *antibiotics* (medicine that kills germs) as directed if they were prescribed.

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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