# Wood Splinters

Wood splinters need to be removed because they can cause skin irritation and infection. If they are close to the surface, splinters can usually be removed easily. Deep splinters may be hard to locate and need treatment by a surgeon.

## SPLINTER REMOVAL

Removal of splinters by your caregiver is considered a surgical procedure.

- The area is carefully cleaned. You may require a small amount of anaesthesia (medicine injected near the splinter to numb the tissue and lessen pain). After the splinter is removed, the area will be cleaned again. A bandage is applied.
- If your splinter is under a fingernail or toenail, then a small section of the nail may need to be removed. As long as the splinter did not extend to the base of the nail, the nail usually grows back normally.
- A splinter that is deeper, more contaminated, or that gets near a structure such as a bone, nerve or blood vessel may need to be removed by a surgeon.
- You may need special X-rays or scans if the splinter is hard to locate.
- Every attempt is made to remove the entire splinter. However, small particles may remain. Tell your caregiver if you feel that a part of the splinter was left behind.

## HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Keep the injured area high up (*elevated*).
- Use the injured area as little as possible.
- Keep the injured area clean and dry. Follow any directions from your caregiver.
- Keep any follow-up or wound check appointments.

## SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- A splinter has been removed, but you are not better in a day or two.
- You develop a temperature.
- Signs of infection develop such as:
  - Redness, swelling or pus around the wound.
  - Red streaks spreading back from your wound towards your body.

## YOU MIGHT NEED A TETANUS SHOT NOW IF:

- You have no idea when you had the last one.
- You have never had a tetanus shot before.
- The injured area had dirt in it.

Even if you have already removed the splinter, call your caregiver to get a tetanus shot if you need one.

If you need a tetanus shot, and you decide not to get one, there is a rare chance of getting tetanus. Sickness from tetanus can be serious. If you did get a tetanus shot, your arm may swell, get red and warm to the touch at the shot site. This is common and not a problem.

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