Wound Infection

A wound infection has happened because germs (*bacteria*) have started growing in the wound. All wounds have some bacteria in them. An infection can occur when the skin has been damaged either by accident or surgically. A surgical example of this would be when your caregiver cuts your skin to remove a mole. If stitches need to be removed, and a wound infection develops, the stitches may have to be removed early. This means that the entire wound may break apart. This may look terrible to you but it is not dangerous. It will heal from the inside to the outside.

Wound infection is more common and can be more complicated for diabetics and for those patients with weakened immune systems (such as for those receiving treatment for cancer).

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Rinse your wound with warm, soapy water four times per day, or as directed by your caregiver.
- When through washing, gently pat the wound dry with a soft fabric. As the wound is healing, millions of tiny new blood vessels are forming. Do not rub the wound. This may cause bleeding. Apply dressing to wound as directed.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- Do not soak wound, as in bathing or swimming, until it is healed or as directed by your caregiver. Avoid work out exercises that make you sweat heavily.
- During healing the wound may itch. You may use over the counter antihistamines in a dosage as recommended on package. If this medication makes you sleepy then take it as a dose at bedtime.
- If your caregiver has prescribed a medication that kills germs (*antibiotics*), take your medication as directed. Take it for the entire length of time it was prescribed, even if the wound appears to be doing well.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- There is increased swelling or increased pain near the wound.
- There is increasing redness (*inflammation*) around the wound.
- There is an increase in the amount of pus coming from the wound.
- More of the wound breaks open if only a small number of the stitches were removed.
- You or your child has an oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C), not controlled by medicine.
- Your baby is older than 3 months with a rectal temperature of 102º F (38.9º C) or higher.
- **Your baby is 3 months old or younger with a rectal temperature of 100.4º F (38º C) or higher.**

Return to your caregiver's office in seven days or as directed to have your wound rechecked.

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