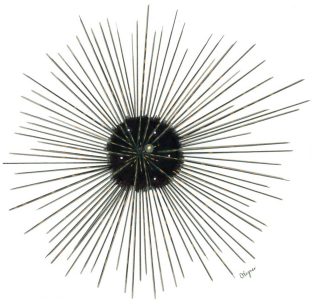
Sea Urchin Injuries

Sea Urchins cause common injuries when a swimmer comes in contact with their spines. The spine of the urchin breaks off in the skin. The spine is often *lodged* (gets stuck in) in the *subcutaneous tissues* (tissue just beneath the skin). The spine causes local tissue reactions and pain.


Sea Urchin

TREATMENT

- If possible, the spine should be removed. If not removed, the spine can move to deeper tissues and become more of a problem.
- Vinegar will dissolve most spines that are located close to the surface. Using vinegar several times per day may be sufficient for treatment.
- Occasionally, spines will have to be surgically removed. Following removal, the usual wound care will work for treatment. Keep the wound dry and clean. Use antibacterial ointments and dressings as suggested by your caregiver.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

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

If you did not receive a tetanus shot from your caregiver because you did not recall when your last one was given, make sure to check with your caregiver'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.

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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