Incision and Drainage of Abscess
(Furuncle, Boil)

An abscess (*boil or furuncle*) is an area infected by germs that contains a collection of pus. Signs and problems (*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. Occasionally, this may spread to surrounding tissues causing cellulitis. Sometimes, a surgeon may make a cut (*incision*) over your abscess. The pus is drained. Gauze may be packed into the space to provide a drain. Keeping a drain or piece of gauze in the incision keeps the skin from healing first. This helps stop the abscess from forming again. The area may be painful for 5 to 7 days. Most people with an abscess do not have high fevers. If seen early, your abscess may not have localized and may not be cut. If it does not get better on its own or with medicines, you may require another appointment.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver. **Use these only if your caregiver has not given medicines that would interfere.**
- When you bathe, remove the gauze drain after soaking. You may then wash the wound gently with mild, soapy water. Repack with gauze as your caregiver directs.
- See your caregiver as directed for a recheck.
- If antibiotics were prescribed, take them as directed.

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, or a general ill feeling.
- You or your child has an oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C).

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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