

A Harm Reduction Guide to Wound Care

OK: Watch



Care for the wound and monitor:

- Keep wound **clean** and **covered**
- Wash your hands before care
- Clean wound every day by rinsing well with tap water or saline
- Avoid scrubbing or touching the wound- it can slow healing
- Cover wound with a bandage
- Change bandage if it is wet or dirty

Caution: Get Checked



See a healthcare provider to check for infection.

If the skin or wound changes:

- **Hot:** feels hot
- **Painful:** hurts more
- **Red:** edges are red or bleeding
- **Odour:** smells bad or different
- **Fluid:** fluid or green/yellow pus
- **Bigger:** wound size or red skin
- **Swollen:** more puffy

STOP: Get Urgent Care



- **Fever-** chills or temperature above 38 degrees Celsius
- **Hot and red skin-** border around wound is bigger than 2cm (size of a nickel)
- **Red streaks-** painful reddish lines coming from wound or red stripes up skin. *may be hard to see on black and brown skin tones

ANTIBIOTIC TIPS

- Only take antibiotics that are prescribed for you
- Do not share prescribed antibiotics
- Do not save your antibiotics for a different infection
- Take antibiotics exactly as prescribed

**Untreated severe wounds can cause serious complications
like amputation or blood infection (sepsis)**



HEALTH
DEPARTMENT

Durham Health Connection Line | 1-800-841-2729 or 905-668-2020
durham.ca/health



Adapted with permission from Towardtheheart.com, BCCDC Harm Reduction Services.