

## OK: Watch



## Caution: Get Checked



## Stop: Get Urgent Care



### 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

### 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

### Get **urgent healthcare** if:

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

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

# A Harm Reduction Guide to Wound Care

## OK: Watch

## Caution: Get Checked

## Stop: Get Urgent Care

### 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

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:** more liquid or green/yellow pus
- **Bigger:** wound or red skin is growing
- **Swollen:** more puffy

Get **urgent** healthcare if you notice any:

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

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

## References

1. British Columbia Provincial Nursing Skin & Wound Committee. Guideline: Assessment and Treatment of Wound Infection. Wound Resources. May 2020. Accessed November 7, 2022. [https://www.clwk.ca/groups/wound-care-resources/custom/?cf\\_id=947&cof\\_id=950](https://www.clwk.ca/groups/wound-care-resources/custom/?cf_id=947&cof_id=950)
2. British Columbia Ministry of Health, British Columbia Centre of Disease Control, & Do Bugs Need Drugs?. Frequently Asked Questions. Antibioticwise.ca. n.d. Accessed November 12, 2022. <https://antibioticwise.ca/faq/>
3. Monteiro J, Phillips KT, Herman DS, et al. Self-treatment of skin infections by people who inject drugs. Drug Alcohol Depend. 2020;206:107695-107695. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2019.107695>