

Abscess Cavity Wound Care

Patient Information General Surgery

Your wound

After the incision and drainage of your abscess, your wound may be packed with a special material, and a dressing will be applied. It has not been closed with stitches or glue to allow any fluid to continue to drain.

Your wound will need regular dressing changes by your practice nurse at your GP surgery, typically every 1 to 2 days, until the abscess cavity has healed. Your practice nurse will assess the wound at each dressing change and determine when wound packing is no longer required.

Please note, if the wound dressing is simple (without packing), you may be instructed how to change the dressing yourself, therefore avoiding the need for regular visits to your practice nurse.

If your abscess has ruptured on its own, apply a dressing and schedule an appointment with your practice nurse to assess healing and receive further guidance.

Caring for your wound

- To reduce the risk of infection it is important to keep your wound clean and dry, therefore avoid soaking your wound in the bath.
- It may be an option to remove the dressing and bathe before attending the appointment for repacking. You can discuss this with your practice nurse.
- Do not use perfumed soaps, perfume or talcum powder on your wound.

Please contact your GP or practice nurse if the wound becomes red, hot to touch and/or the wound discharge smells.

Bleeding is rare, but if your wound starts to bleed heavily, apply direct pressure to the area using a clean material if needed. If the bleeding does not stop, return to the Same Day Emergency Care unit or Surgical Assessment Unit.

Nutrition and lifestyle

Good nutrition will help with wound healing. A healthy balanced diet including vegetables, fruit and plenty of fluids is recommended. Taking an A-Z multivitamin supplement can also encourage wound healing.

If you smoke, vape or drink heavily it is recommended you consider quitting or cutting back. Advice and support can be found via Aneurin Bevan University Health Board website <https://abuhb.nhs.wales>, and Gwent Drug and Alcohol Service (GDAS) <https://www.gdas.wales>.

Pain relief

Over-the-counter pain relief, such as paracetamol is recommended to manage discomfort. Please follow the instructions on the packaging.

Avoid aspirin-based painkillers, as they may increase the risk of bleeding or bruising. However, if you take aspirin regularly as part of your prescribed medication, continue doing so unless advised otherwise by your doctor or healthcare provider.

Returning to work

The size and location of your wound, along with any procedures performed, will determine when it is safe for you to return to work. Consult your doctor or nurse for guidance before discharge. If deemed necessary, your doctor can provide a sick note.

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you require further information, please contact: 01633 493680 (Same Day Emergency Care Unit); or 01633 493341 (Surgical Assessment Unit).

This document is available in Welsh /

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