

Wound Check: Care Instructions

Your Care Instructions

People have wounds that need care for many reasons. You may have a cut that needs care after surgery. You may have a cut or puncture wound from an accident. Or you may have a wound because of a condition like diabetes.

Whatever the cause of your wound, there are things you can do to care for it at home.

Your doctor may also want you to come back for a wound check. The wound check lets the doctor know how your wound is healing and if you need more treatment.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

- If your doctor told you how to care for your wound, follow your doctor's instructions. If you did not get instructions, follow this general advice:
 - You may cover the wound with a thin layer of petroleum jelly, such as Vaseline, and a nonstick bandage.
 - Apply more petroleum jelly and replace the bandage as needed.
- Keep the wound dry for the first 24 to 48 hours. After this, you can shower if your doctor okays it. Pat the wound dry.
- Be safe with medicines. Read and follow all instructions on the label.
 - If the doctor gave you a prescription medicine for pain, take it as prescribed.
 - If you are not taking a prescription pain medicine, ask your doctor if you can take an over-the-counter medicine.
- If your doctor prescribed antibiotics, take them as directed. Do not stop taking them just because you feel better. You need to take the full course of antibiotics.
- If you have stitches, do not remove them on your own. Your doctor will tell you when to come back to have them removed.
- If you have Steri-Strips, leave them on until they fall off.
- If possible, prop up the injured area on a pillow anytime you sit or lie down during the next 3 days. Try to keep it above the level of your heart. This will help reduce swelling.

When should you call for help?



Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- You have new pain, or the pain gets worse.
- The skin near the wound is cold or pale or changes color.
- You have tingling, weakness, or numbness near the wound.

- The wound starts to bleed, and blood soaks through the bandage. Oozing small amounts of blood is normal.
- You have symptoms of infection, such as:
 - Increased pain, swelling, warmth, or redness.
 - Red streaks leading from the wound.
 - Pus draining from the wound.
 - A fever.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- You do not get better as expected.

Where can you learn more?

Go to <https://www.healthwise.net/patiented>

Enter **P342** in the search box to learn more about "**Wound Check: Care Instructions**".

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