



**University of North Carolina Wilmington
Abrons Student Health Center**

INSTRUCTION SHEET: WOUND CARE

The Student Health Provider has treated you today for a wound of the skin. As with any break in the skin, infection is possible. If wounds are dirty, they should be cleaned to remove as much dirt and debris as possible. Cleaning is uncomfortable, but dirt and debris left in a wound increase the chance of infection. Normally, wounds heal in several days to two weeks. Healing time depends on several factors, including the size and depth of the wound, and the age and health of the patient.

MEASURES YOU SHOULD TAKE TO HELP TREAT YOUR WOUND:

1. Clean the wound daily with liquid hand soap and water. Wound cleaning can be done in the shower or bathtub. Old dressings can be soaked to remove them more easily.
2. After cleaning, re-dress the wound. Apply over-the-counter antibacterial ointment and cover the wound with a gauze dressing. You can also leave the wound open to air for a few hours before applying the new dressing – do so only if you will not be active or doing anything that might get the wound dirty.
3. When changing the dressing, inspect the wound for signs of infection: pus on the wound, increasing redness/swelling/warmth around the wound, or red streaks spreading from the wound. If you suspect infection is present, return promptly to the Student Health Center or see your personal/referral provider.
4. Over-the-counter pain medications can help relieve the discomfort associated with wounds. Acetaminophen, ibuprofen, or naproxen can be taken, depending on individual preferences. Elevating wounds above the level of your heart also helps minimize pain and swelling.