

Avoiding Wound Infections

The skin protects the body from infection. Breaks in the skin can occur from punctures, abrasions, lacerations and incisions from surgery. Healthy individuals can develop infections through their skin. People with a decreased ability to fight infection are more at risk.

Signs and symptoms of wound infections:

Elevated temperature of 100.0 F or greater	Redness and warmth at the wound site
Increased amount of drainage	Swelling around the wound site
Change in color of drainage	Increased pain at or around the wound site
Odor to drainage	Redness and warmth at the wound site
Increased pain at or around the wound site	Swelling around the wound site

Risk factors:

Older age	Malnutrition
Diabetes	Hospitalization
Paralysis or limited mobility	Smoking
Immune system disorders	Severe obesity

Complications of wound infections:

- Death of the surrounding tissue, muscle, connective tissue, and bones
- Infection in the blood stream, possibly affecting other organs
- Septic shock, which may result in multiple organ failure and and death

Treatment

Dependent upon the cause, degree of infection and bacteria present, may require antibiotics.

If you exhibit any of the above signs or symptoms of wound infection, notify your physician.

Sources: www.wocn.org, www.acwcne.org
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and JAMA

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