

Caring for your wound at home

This information sheet has been written to provide information for caring for your wound at home. We hope it answers any questions or concerns you may have.

Bathing

Can I have a bath or a shower when I go home?

Yes, you can have a bath or a shower.

If your wound does not have a dressing in place when you go home, then you can have a bath or a shower, simply let water run over the wound.

If your wound does have a dressing then you can still bathe or shower. Dressings can absorb water and may require changing shortly after you shower so for this reason shower on the day the dressing is due to be changed.

Showering is preferable to bathing, so that the wound does not 'soak' in water.

Do not use soap, shower gel, body lotion, talcum powder or other bathing products directly over your healing wound; and do not rub the area, as this might be painful and could delay healing.

Dressings

Does my wound need a dressing?

No, your wound does not require a dressing if it is dry and healed.

Yes, a dressing may be required if

- any fluid is coming out of the wound
- on the advice of a healthcare professional to reduce the risk of infection
- to protect the area until your wound has healed
- to prevent stitches or clips catching on clothing

If a dressing is required, the ward staff will have arranged for you to be seen at a Community Treatment Room or by a Community District Nurse at home. Otherwise you will be advised to remove the dressing yourself the day after you go home and then leave the wound without a dressing.

Stitches

Dissolvable stitches will usually dissolve in about six weeks. In some cases you may have stitches or clips that require removal. Ward staff will let you know this before you go home and will make arrangements for you to attend a Community treatment room or a Community district nurse may visit you at home to remove them.

Bruising

If you have had catheter studies (angiogram/angioplasty) you should check the wound site for the first few days when you go home. There may be some bruising but not usually swelling. Bruising should settle after 2 weeks.

Bleeding

Following an angiogram or angioplasty procedure, if the wound bleeds then put pressure just above the wound for about 20 minutes

For other wounds place a pad or tissues on the wound and press for about 20 minutes. If the bleeding does not stop or you have numbness, pain or swelling you should contact the Recovery Advice Line **0151 600 1056 (24 hrs)** or contact your General Practitioner (own doctor) or visit your nearest NHS Walk-in Centre or Accident & Emergency Department.

It is common to experience bruising, tenderness and slight discomfort on movement.

Infection

If you develop an infection you will usually be treated with a course of antibiotics. You're more likely to develop an infection if you:

- smoke
- have diabetes or a condition that affects healing
- have a condition or treatment that affects your immune system

It's important that you know how to tell if you are developing an infection after you go home. If your wound becomes infected, you may see any of the following symptoms:

- Redness to the skin around your wound
- Heat or swelling around the wound
- A thicker fluid coming away from the wound
- An unpleasant smell
- An increase in your wound pain
- Any opening or gaping of the wound
- Develop a temperature
- Feel generally unwell

Who do I contact if I have any problems after I go home?

Please call our **Recovery Advice Line – 0151 600 1056 - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week**

If you require a copy of this leaflet in large print or any other language please contact us quoting the leaflet code and the language or format you require.