Wound Care

Here are ways to help wounds heal more quickly, prevent infection and keep infection from spreading to others.

- Keep wounds covered with a clean, dry nonstick (telfa-type) bandage and bacitracin ointment. Change the dressing at least daily or when it becomes dirty or damp.
- Wash hands regularly with soap and water or alcohol-based hand gel. Always wash immediately after touching infected skin or any item that comes in contact with a draining wound. Avoid repeated touching of your nose, face or other skin area.
- Maintain good general hygiene with regular bathing.
- Do not share items that may become contaminated with wound drainage, such as towels, clothing, bedding, bar soap, razors, and athletic equipment that touches the skin. Launder contaminated clothing after each use and dry thoroughly. Use hot water and bleach, if possible.
- If you are not able to keep your wound covered with a clean, dry bandage, do not participate in activities where you have skin-to-skin contact (such as athletic activities) until your wound is healed. Do not run or lift weights if the area is painful or swollen.
- Clean equipment and other surfaces with which individuals have bare skin contact with a detergent/disinfectant that is suitable for the type of surface being cleaned and specifies Staphylococcus aureus on the product label. (If appropriate for the surface, 1 T. bleach to 1 qt. water can also be used for cleaning.)
- Avoid swimming and hot tub use until the infection is gone. Check on your tetanus immunization status. A tetanus booster may be recommended if your last booster was over five years ago.

When should I seek emergency evaluation?

- Fever/chills
- Worsening redness and/or swelling of the affected area
- Painful or limited movement of the affected area

Call Dial-A-Nurse at (804) 289-8700 for an appointment with the Student Health Center. If the SHC is closed, consult Emergency and After Hours Care or call the Campus Police at (804) 289-8911.

Adapted from March 2006 prevention practice guidelines, Department of Health and Human Services and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.