

Basic First Aid for Injection-Related Wounds

Many individuals who inject drugs are at risk for wounds and skin injuries related to injection practices and the drugs and adulterants in the drug supply they are taking.

Basic first aid is not hard to do. It is important to take care of skin issues before they get worse.

Covering a simple wound — such as a cut, scratch, or scrape

1. Clean the wound with water (do not use alcohol or peroxide).
2. Put petroleum-based products on the wound, such as jelly, ointment like A&D,TM or Xeroform[®] gauze to keep a moist healing environment.
3. Cover with a bandage. Do not let the wound dry out.
4. Repeat step one and change the bandage every day until healed.



Wash your hands.



Stop the bleeding.



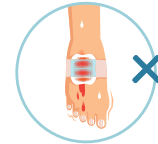
Clean the wound with water.



Put on an antibiotic or petroleum jelly.



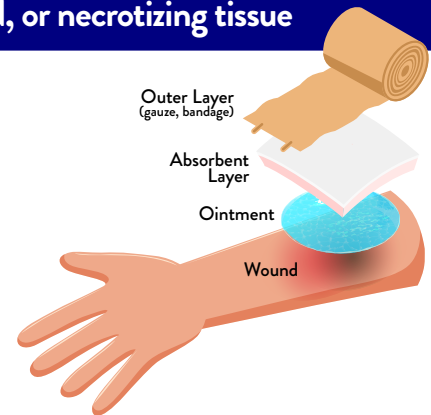
Cover the wound.



Change the covering every day.

Covering a more serious wound — such as an abscess, xylazine wound, or necrotizing tissue

1. Clean the wound with soap and water (do not use alcohol or peroxide).
2. Put petroleum-based products on the wound, such as jelly, ointment like A&D,TM or Xeroform[®] gauze to keep a moist healing environment.
3. Cover with an absorbent layer if there is drainage. Gauze or ABD (abdominal) pads work well.
4. Cover with an outer layer of rolled gauze or a fabric bandage to hold the dressing in place.
5. Do not let the wound dry out.
6. Repeat step one and change the bandage every day until healed.



Most importantly, do not play with or pick at the wound or scab. Let it heal.

Some wounds require advanced medical attention, especially Xylazine-related wounds. If a wound is not healing or getting worse, or you have a fever, quickly seek wound care treatment from a medical provider.

To see if a wound is healing or getting worse, draw a circle around it, over time if it extends beyond the circle, it is likely growing larger. Take a photo of the wound daily with your phone. Check the wound daily, and seek medical attention if symptoms worsen.

Take care of your skin and avoid infections. Visit your local OADPOP for basic first aid supplies or referrals for more serious skin injuries.



Did you know?

Opioid-Associated Disease Prevention and Outreach Programs (OADPOP) throughout Maryland provide first aid supplies for free! Use them.

Scan the code to find an OADPOP near you.





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POINT Center MD is Maryland's go-to destination for drug user health education and support. It provides outreach workers, community-based organizations, and service providers with accessible tools, training opportunities, and practical guidance to strengthen services for people who use drugs in Maryland.

As a collaborative program of the Maryland Department of Health and HealthHIV, POINT Center MD helps the workforce stay informed, skilled, and connected through a combination of learning resources, best practices, and statewide coordination. The platform supports organizations in delivering responsive, person-centered services and fosters consistency and quality across drug user health efforts in Maryland.



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