

Emergency Care Services



Scan the QR code for a list of local hospital locations.



When should you seek help?



A local Harm Reduction Worker can go with you to the hospital, clinic or medical appointment.

In Haliburton:

call or text 705-340-3121

In City of Kawartha Lakes:

call or text 705-928-4456

In Northumberland County:

call or text 905-269-0693

Go to hospital or call 9-1-1 if you:

- Feel very tired, have chills or a fever.
- Have chest pains.
- See red streaks spreading fast from the abscess (every few hours or the next day).



Not seeking help for an infected abscess:

- Can be life-threatening.
- May require hospitalization.
- May cause serious infection, loss of limb, and/or serious heart problems.

Care of Abscess Wounds GUIDE

Adapted with the permission of The Regional Municipality of Waterloo (Public Health and Emergency Services)

What is an abscess?

An abscess is a pus or blood-filled sore under the skin. Signs of an abscess can include: swelling, redness, warmth, pain, and/or leaking pus.

What can cause an abscess?

- Injecting outside of a vein, into inflamed or damaged skin, or into areas with poor circulation.
- Not cleaning the injection site or hands.
- Reusing or sharing needles or other equipment.
- Use of cocaine, amphetamines, xylazine are higher risk.

How to look after an abscess?



Wash your hands (with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub).

If the skin is not broken, clean the area with soap & water. Hold a warm, wet washcloth on the area for 20 minutes several times a day.



If the skin is broken, clean the area with soap and water or sterile water. Apply gauze and secure with tape.



Change the gauze when it becomes soiled or wet, or after 2-3 days. If the gauze is stuck to your skin, dampen the gauze with clean water before removing.

Do NOT:

- Touch the abscess unless hands are clean.
- Inject near the abscess.
- Puncture, cut or drain the abscess yourself.
- Use alcohol wipes or hydrogen peroxide on an open abscess.



Tips to prevent an abscess:

- Wash your hands before using.
- Use new supplies.
- Clean the site with an alcohol wipe BEFORE injecting.
- Try flagging to make sure you're in a vein.
- Use a different site every time.
- Consider changing how you use while the site heals.
- Avoid areas of the body that are higher risk of infection like your wrists, hands, feet, neck, breasts, armpits, or groin.

To find supplies near you visit ohrdp.ca