

TREATMENT OF YOUR ABSCESS

You have been diagnosed with an abscess. An abscess is a localized collection of pus that forms when there is a skin infection. Please follow the directions below in caring for the infection:

For all abscesses:

- Keep the area covered with a gauze dressing, which should be changed if it gets dirty.
- Use warm compresses to the area, at least 4 times a day. You can use a warm damp washcloth, a warm pack, or soak in warm clean water.
 - A warm pack can be made by putting dry, uncooked rice in a clean cotton sock, tying off the end, and placing it in the microwave for a minute at a time until it is warm.
- If you were given antibiotics, make sure to take them as directed.
- Rest the area as much as possible, elevating the abscess above your heart. No working out until the infection has improved.
- You are contagious until the infection has resolved. Make sure to wash your hands frequently. Wash your hands every time you touch the area. Do not share towels or soap.

If your abscess was opened with an Incision and Drainage:

- Keep the abscess covered 24 hours a day, removing bandages once daily to wash with warm soap and water.
- If the abscess was packed (with a cotton wick), leave it in until instructed by your clinician to remove the packing or return for re-evaluation. Do not keep packing in place more than 3 days.
 - To remove the packing at home, wet the gauze, then pull out the packing.

SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION URGENTLY IF YOU HAVE:

- Fever or chills, or you feel ill (nausea, vomiting, lightheadedness)
- Increasing amounts of pus/discharge in the area
- Increasing pain or redness
- Increased swelling

Check our website: uhs.berkeley.edu to learn more about this medical concern or others.

For an appointment: uhs.berkeley.edu or call **510-642-2000**

Clinic Nurse **510-643-7197** for advice