

Sepsis & wound care

Each year, 26 million people worldwide suffer from sepsis with an average of six million deaths. It is the primary cause of death from infection and is more common than heart attacks. In fact, sepsis is a contributing factor in one third of all hospital deaths.^{1 2 3 4}

The largest organ of the body is the skin. Any damage to the skin creates a risk of infection.⁵ A wound is defined as an injury to the protective function of the skin and the origin can be either external or internal. External factors include penetrating elements and trauma, whereas internal examples could be an impaired immune system or an underlying chronic illness.

Good wound care has an important role in preventing sepsis, as any break in the skin can potentially harbor bacteria that may become a cross-infection risk to patients.⁶

Key recommendations

- ✓ Always wash and/or sanitize your hands **before and after touching** the surroundings, the patient, the skin or dealing with an open wound
- ✓ Always **wear gloves** when caring for wounds, especially if you could be at risk of contact with bodily fluids
- ✓ **Cleanse the wound** before covering with an approved wound dressing to protect it from external contamination and infection
- ✓ **Observe and monitor** the wound and patient for signs of an infection or sepsis

Discover more about sepsis and hygiene on www.tork.ie/WHHD

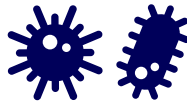
5 facts on wound care



In the EU, **4 million people** will get a wound every year⁷



Among adults with sepsis **11% had a skin infection**⁸



Strategies to prevent and minimize risk of wound infection include hand hygiene and cleansing of the wound, using dressings which minimize the potential for bacteria entry, and adherence to basic wound management principles⁹

Signs of wound infection include

increased erythema, pain, swelling, heat, purulence or a strong odour^{10 11}



Up to 50% of acute hospital beds are occupied by patients with a wound in the EU⁷

5 moments of hand hygiene

Focus on caring for a patient with a post-operative wound

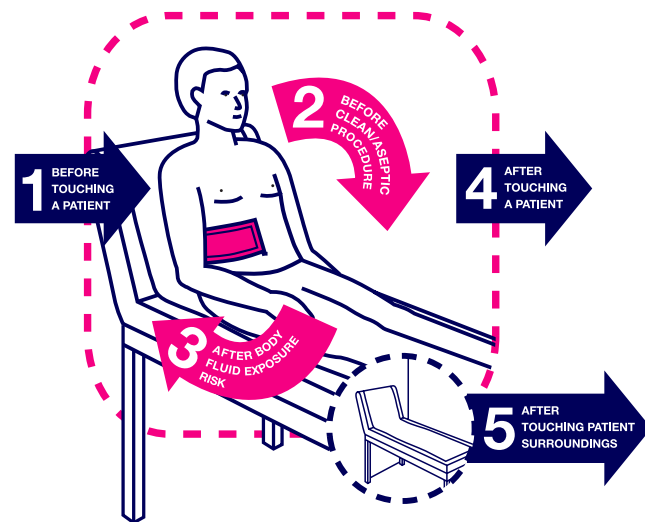


Illustration taken from WHO Guidelines on Hand Hygiene in Health Care

2. Immediately before touching the post-operative wound dressing/site, for example:

- 2a. Before physically examining the post-operative wound site, including before taking wound samples for microbiological investigations, if required
- 2b. Before touching the wound to remove stitches/clips
- 2c. Before preparing the necessary items for replacing the wound dressing
- 2d. Before replacing the actual post-operative wound dressing

3. Immediately after any task involving potential body fluid exposure, such as:

- 3a. After post-operative wound examination/sample collection
- 3b. After removing stitches/clips
- 3c. After undertaking a post-operative wound dressing change

1. Lang E & Huckson S. GIN Conference. 2013. (online) <https://www.g-i-n.net/conference/past-conferences/10th-conference/monday/245-pm-to-545-pm/lang-63.pdf>. 2. Global Sepsis Alliance. Resolutions. 2017. (online) <https://www.srlf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/GSAResolution-Announcement-May-2017News-Release.pdf>. 3. UK Sepsis Trust. Sepsis Manual. 2018. (online) https://sepsistrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Sepsis_Manual_2017_inal_v7-red.pdf. 4. Liu et al. JAMA. 2014;312(1):9092. 5. WebMD. 2014. (online) <https://www.webmd.com/skin-problems-and-treatments/picture-of-the-skin#1>. 6. WHO. Prevention and management of wound infection. (online) http://www.who.int/hac/techguidance/tools/guidelines_prevention_and_management_wound_infection.pdf. 7. Posnett, J, et al. J. Wound Care. 2014;18(4). 8. Centre for Disease Control. (online) <https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/sepsis/infographic.html>. 9. IWIL. Wound Infection in Clinical Practice. 2016. (Online) <http://www.woundinfection-institute.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/IWILWound-infection-in-clinical-practice.pdf>. 10. Gardner SE, et al. Wound Repair Regen. 2001; 9(3):178186. 11. Ousey K, et al. J Wound Care. 2017;26(10).

Think hygiene. **Act** to prevent. **Care** for patients.

