



You have been diagnosed with an **abscess**. This is an infection in a deep layer of the skin with pus, redness, pain, and swelling. An abscess is caused by bacteria. Normally bacteria live on the skin and do not cause any problems. But when a break in the skin happens, bacteria can enter the body. This can happen with a cut, scratch, animal bite, insect bite, or other skin conditions. But you may not have even noticed because it was so tiny.

What can I do to feel better?

- Keep the infected area clean and dry
- Follow any wound packing instructions as recommended by your doctor
- **As often as possible, raise the infected area above the level of your heart.** This helps decrease swelling. Try to do this for 30 minutes at least 4 times a day.
- If you have diabetes, it is very important that you monitor your blood sugar to help your infection get better.
- Take the antibiotic you received from your doctor as directed.

When can I expect my infection to look better?

Typically, it will look better in 48-72 hours. **It is not unusual for the area of redness to be bigger (and extend outside of marked lines) over the first 48 hours**, but soon the area will become less bright and begin to fade. After 48 hours, the size of the area of redness should be receding as well. The abscess will likely take 1-2 weeks to heal completely.

At day 5 call your doctor if you have:

- Worsening pain
- Heat
- Bright red skin
- New drainage

What side effects should I look out for?

Call your doctor if these occur:

- Worsening drainage from the infection
- New fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) or higher
- Worsening pain in the infected area
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Rash

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