

Abscess: Patient Education after Dalbavancin

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 don't 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 treatment did I receive?

In addition to drainage of the abscess, you were treated with a one-time intravenous (IV) injection of an antibiotic called Dalbavancin. **Dalbavancin** is very slow to leave the body, so it will still be working to fight the bacteria for at least 7 days. The changes on the skin can last for a few weeks, long after the infection has been adequately treated, so your skin may not look normal at 7 days.

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.

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.

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

When should I follow up with a doctor?

Follow up by phone, video or in-person visit with your primary care doctor within 2-3 days. If you do not have a primary care doctor at Michigan Medicine, then please attend the in-person follow up at the Advanced Diagnostic and Therapeutic Unit (ADTU), which was arranged for you by the Emergency Department.

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