

### **Introduction**

Some sores have trouble healing on their own. Sores that will not heal are also known as wounds or chronic wounds. A chronic wound is a sore that is having a hard time healing. There are several problems that can cause a sore to not heal well.

A sore that is having a hard time healing may develop dead tissue, which is also known as necrotic tissue. It may collect bacteria and become infected. It can also become too wet or too dry. These problems can happen on their own or at the same time.

This reference summary discusses treatment for the different problems that cause a sore to have trouble healing. It covers treatment for necrotic tissue, bacteria and infection, and sores that are too wet or too dry to heal well. This summary also covers what your doctor may do.



### **Necrotic Tissue**

Necrotic tissue is a term that covers several different kinds of unhealthy and dead tissue. Dead tissue can cause your sore to become infected with germs (bacteria).

If your sore has necrotic tissue, your doctor will need to remove it. The process of removing the dead tissue is called debridement.

There are many different ways your healthcare provider may remove and clean off the dead tissue. The names you may hear your doctor use for the different types of debridement include autolytic, mechanical, surgical, sharps, enzymatic, and MDT.

Your doctor may suggest autolytic debridement. Autolytic debridement works with the body's natural healing processes to debride a sore.

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Your doctor may suggest mechanical debridement. Mechanical debridement uses force to remove unhealthy tissue. Wet-to-dry dressings, hydrotherapy and ultrasound are all types of mechanical debridement.

Surgical or sharps debridement is the fastest and most thorough method of debridement. But, it can cause pain and bleeding. It can be done with traditional surgical tools or lasers.



Enzymatic debridement uses a special medicine that is put on a sore. It dissolves dead and unhealthy tissue. Enzymatic debridement is safe, easy, and effective.

MDT stands for maggot debridement therapy. It uses clean fly larvae that are placed on the sore to clean away unhealthy tissue and kill bacteria. MDT is safe, painless, and effective. Some people do not like the idea of MDT.

Your doctor will assess you and your sore and decide what the best methods of debridement are for you.

Debridement is usually an ongoing process, and your treatment plan may include several kinds of debridement. For instance, your doctor may decide to use surgical debridement first and then continue treatment with enzymatic debridement.



## **Bacteria**

Sometimes a sore can collect and grow bacteria that get in the way of healing. Bacteria can lead to infection. Sores that have a lot of bacteria need to be treated. Without treatment, infection can lead to pain, difficulty healing, and even amputation.

An infected sore may cause fever, redness, pain, a bad odor, pus, and an area around the sore that is warm to the touch. If your sore is infected your healthcare provider may suggest several different treatment options. Your healthcare provider may suggest cleaning the sore with debridement.

A dressing that has silver in it can be used. A dressing is another word for a cloth or material that covers or protects a wound or sore. A dressing is a lot like a bandage.

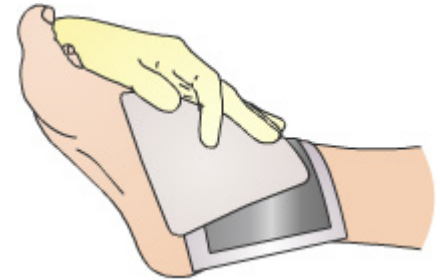
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The silver in silver dressings stops the growth of bacteria. Gels with silver in them may also be used.

Your doctor may prescribe antibiotic medicine to help fight a large infection. If your doctor prescribes antibiotics, make sure to take all of them. Follow your doctor's or pharmacist's instructions on how to take your medicine.

Your doctor may use other types of dressings to help prevent infection from getting worse or happening again.



Silver Dressing

Keeping your hands clean can help prevent additional problems. Hand washing is one of the most important things you can do to prevent infections. Make sure to always wash your hands before and after working with a sore. Wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds.

### Moisture Imbalance

The amount of moisture a sore has needs to be balanced for it to heal properly. When a sore is either too wet or too dry, it can cause problems with healing.

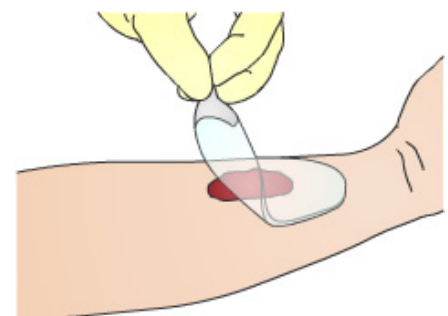
Sores need to be moist to heal correctly. But too much moisture can prevent healing, cause pain, and lead to infection. The skin around a sore that is too wet can get very soft, turn white and get infected easily.

On the other hand, a sore that is too dry can also prevent healing, cause pain, and lead to infection. If your sore is too wet or too dry, your doctor may recommend several different treatment options.

First, your doctor will examine your sore and decide what is causing the moisture imbalance.

If the moisture imbalance is because of an infection, the infection will need to be treated.

For sores that are too wet, dressings that absorb extra moisture may be used. For sores that are too dry, dressings that provide and maintain moisture, called hydrogel dressings, may be used.



Hydrogel  
Dressing

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## Advanced Treatment

Even if your doctor has treated necrotic tissue, infection, or moisture imbalance, your sore may still have trouble healing.

If this happens your doctor will re-examine your sore and decide if he or she needs to treat any necrotic tissue, infection or moisture imbalance again.

Your doctor may decide to use a wound VAC device along with other treatments. A wound VAC uses negative pressure to help heal wounds.

If your sore is still not healing after treatments, your doctor may recommend advanced treatment options. These advanced treatments work on a microscopic level with your body's cells during the healing process.

Advanced treatment may include special dressings that help promote healing on a cellular level.



Advanced Treatment

Your doctor may suggest a treatment using a reconstituted matrix. Natural extracellular matrix treatment uses a substance that helps healing on a cellular level. Another advanced treatment that your doctor may consider is a skin substitute.

## Summary

There are several problems that can cause a sore to not heal well. A sore that is having a hard time healing may develop dead tissue, which is also known as necrotic tissue. It may collect and grow bacteria and become infected. It can also become too wet or too dry. These problems can happen on their own or at the same time.

If a sore has necrotic tissue it must be removed through the process of debridement. There are many different ways your healthcare provider may debride a sore. Some of the different types of debridement include autolytic, mechanical, surgical, sharps, enzymatic, and MDT.

Sores can collect and grow bacteria and become infected. If a sore is infected, it may be treated with debridement, special dressings, and antibiotics.

Sores need to maintain the right moisture level. If a sore is too wet or too dry it can cause serious complications. If a sore has a moisture imbalance, it may be treated with special dressings that either maintain moisture or absorb it.

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Advanced treatment that works on a cellular level may be needed for some sores that do not respond to regular treatment.

Talk with your doctor or healthcare provider about the treatment options available for you. If you have any questions, make sure to ask.

Always wash your hands before and after working with your sore. Be sure to follow your healthcare provider's directions for caring for your wound.



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