



Basic wound care for non-medics (algorithm)

Target group & disclaimer: The recommendation first and foremost targets non-professional caregivers and health care professionals without wound expertise. Professional caregivers may benefit additionally from the publications referenced below. The recommendations and guidelines will be chosen by a select group of EWMA experts with experience in wound management from war, crisis and emergency aid contexts. The guidelines are thus not based on a broad consensus.

Practical file inspired by the:

- *Wilderness Medical Society Practice Guidelines for Basic Wound Management in the Austere Environment (2014)*

Full text: [https://www.wemjournal.org/article/S1080-6032\(14\)00112-4/fulltext](https://www.wemjournal.org/article/S1080-6032(14)00112-4/fulltext)

PDF: <https://www.wemjournal.org/action/showPdf?pii=S1080-6032%2814%2900112-4>

- *MSF Wound Care Protocol (2018)*

Marelli, A., Caluwaerts, A., Wagner, E., D'Hollander, K., Goudmaeker, S. Wound Care Protocol. Medecins Sans Frontieres.

PDF: https://www.globalfirstaidcentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/L029NURM02E-P_Wound-Care-protocol_OCB_EN_2018.pdf

PREPARE

- Wash and disinfect hands ([link to WHO guide](#))
- Prepare a clean and dust free environment
- Collect material needed for wound care ([link to EWMA tutorial](#))
- Position the person/patient comfortably

CHECK (patient)

- Assess health status patient
- Ask for pain and give pain killers when needed (most oral painkillers need 45 minutes to be effective)
- Check (evaluate) and take specific actions for:
 - o Bleeding control => apply pressure or tourniquet ([link to additional guidelines](#))
 - o Burns => cooling of the burned surface ([link to EWMA guideline](#))
 - o Frost bites ([link to EWMA guideline](#))
 - o Foreign object
- Make sure the patient is well nourished and hydrated



OBSERVE (wound)

- Surface, depth, location
- Dry wound or a lot of secretions
- Signs of infection (redness, pus, increasing pain, increased swelling, increased secretions)

CLEAN

- Wash and disinfect hands ([link to WHO guide](#))
- Wear gloves if available
- Clean/rinse the wound and surrounding skin with plenty of water ([see to EWMA guidelines](#))
- Remove dirt/little foreign objects/debris from the wound bed
- Disinfect in case of infection ([link to EWMA guideline](#))
- Dry surrounding skin with clean towel (pat dry)

DRESS

- Put on a medical, wound healing ointment. If not available, Vaseline, honey, sugar, or clean vegetable oil with sterile dressing ([link to EWMA tutorial](#))
- Fixate the dressing with bandage ([link to EWMA tutorial](#))

FINISH

- Follow up – evacuation needed when:
 - o Severe bleeding
 - o Large or very deep wound
 - o Large foreign body
 - o Near major blood vessel, joint or organ
 - o Severe infection/ High fever
 - o Bite wounds
- Continue pain assessment and administration of pain killers
- Control dressing (secretions/comfort)
- Clean room and organize/clean used materials
- Wash and disinfect hands