

Tech Bingo Scavenger Hunt – Wound Infection Infographic

Karey Clark

Department of Nursing, Texas Woman's University

NURS 5213: Educational Theory, Communication, and Learning Technologies

Dr. Laura Kubin

April 18, 2025

Size Increase

A wound should not increase in size. If nutritional or perfusion issues can not be identified, then infection needs to be considered (Bowers & Franco, 2020).

Temperature Increase

Assess for a localized rise in temperature or fever. In addition, nausea, vomiting, and chills are signs of systemic infection. These symptoms could indicate imminent sepsis (Bowers & Franco, 2020).

Os - Probes to Bone

If bone is probed or exposed, infection should be considered and ruled out using x-ray, MRI, CT scan, or bone biopsy (Bowers & Franco, 2020).

New Areas of Breakdown

If new areas surrounding the wound begin to break down, an infectious process should be suspected (Bowers & Franco, 2020).

Remember, symptoms of infection should be evaluated as a whole to get a more complete picture. Careful evaluation and consideration helps to prevent unnecessary testing and use of antibiotics. When there is genuine concern for infection, a swab culture or biopsy is the preferred course of action to effectively direct patient care (Faley & Smolen, 2023).

Wound Care Nurses Know

01

02

03

04

05

06

07

08

The Signs of Infection in Wounds Using STONEES

Exudative

Increased drainage, not attributed to dependent positioning or lack of compression, should be considered a sign of infection. Also, while a purulent or colored drainage can indicate infection, dressings and topical medications can create the appearance of purulence or blue/green drainage. These should also be taken into consideration (Bowers & Franco, 2020).

Erythema/Edema

Slight redness often accompanies the inflammatory process, but redness that increases or remains well into the healing process may signal infection. Likewise, edema that is newly present, regardless of leg elevation or compression, may signal infection (Bowers & Franco, 2020).

Smell

Malodorous drainage or dressings can be caused by infection, but soiled dressings can also emit odor due to the breakdown of biological matter. Odor should be evaluated after a wound has been cleaned and dressings removed (Hilton, 2022).

Bonus Symptom - Increased Pain

Various wound types can elicit various levels of pain, even with no other signs of infection. Any acute increase should be a concern for infection, especially after ruling out any source of additional pain such as a dressing that has been applied too tightly (Woo, 2024).

References

- Bowers, S., & Franco, E. (2020). Chronic wounds: Evaluation and management. *American Family Physician*, 101(3), 159-166. Retrieved from <https://ezp.twu.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/chronic-wounds-evaluation-management/docview/2454214211/se-2>
- Faley, K., & Smolen, A. (2023, March 7). *How to tell if a wound is healing or infected*. OSF HealthCare Blog. <https://www.osfhealthcare.org/blog/how-to-tell-if-a-wound-is-healing-or-infected/>
- Hilton, L. (2022, May 31). *Spotting signs of wound infection is the first step in proper treatment*. Wound Care Education Institute. <https://blog.wcei.net/spotting-signs-of-wound-infection-is-the-first-step-in-proper-treatment>
- Woo, K. (2024). The Chronic Wound-Related Pain Model: Holistic Assessment and Person-Centered Treatment. *Clinics in Geriatric Medicine*, 40(3), 501.