



Overdosing, wound care and other medical related information

If you are concerned about your cuts or about what you have put into your body the best thing you can do is to see a doctor or nurse who is medically trained.

Wound care.

Caring for your cuts and burns and other injuries is important and there are things you can do to limit the risk of your injuries becoming infected or causing more harm than you want to.

Making sure that you have a self-care kit is a good way of looking after yourself. You will need to know the best ways of dressing the part of your body that you cut and make sure that you have plenty of supplies for when you need them. Here is a [link](#) to page on wound care on Recover Your Life's website. Make sure that you keep plenty of dressings, cream, tape along with anything that helps you to feel better like an essential oil or flower remedy.

Getting free dressings

It can be expensive to have to keep buying bandages and dressings for your cuts. It may be possible to get some for free. Some health centres and Doctor's surgeries issue free dressings, others give prescriptions. To see what is possible you can make an appointment with a practices nurse at the treatment room of your Doctors surgery. Walk in centres are another option, click [here](#) for info on your nearest centre.

You can also contact companies who produce dressings and ask for free samples click [here](#) for an example or contact pharmacies that are close to you and ask if they have any out of date wound care packs that they are happy to let you have.

School or college / University nurses also have access to supplies of dressings and bandages and do not have to pass your details on.

Overdosing

When someone takes more than the daily recommended dose of a medication or substance it is considered an overdose. This may be done by accident, or as a method of self harm or suicide.

The dangers of overdosing cannot be assessed over the phone or by text or email. It will depend on lots of other factors including amount taken, what else has been eaten / drunk, how many times an over-dose has been taken before, the size and weight of the person. Overdoses can cause damage to major organs like the heart, kidneys, liver and brain and can also cause ulcers and damage to the stomach lining.

If a person has taken an overdose of something solid (like tablets) and is fully conscious they can make themselves sick to reverse the effect. If they are feeling drowsy, having seizures, can't walk or have stopped breathing an ambulance should be called immediately on 999 and any bottles and or containers that the substance was in should be shown to the medical professionals.

What will happen at the hospital or doctors?

If you go to the hospital or doctor you can expect to be asked some or all of the following – what you took, where you got it, how long ago and if you have taken anything else. They will ask about allergies, medical problems and if you have overdosed before.

If the staff team want to get the medication out of your body they may give you something called active charcoal to make you sick or they may insert a tube into your throat and suction the contents of your stomach out. You may then be sent home or have to stay in for a night or two and you will probably be offered a follow-up session with a mental health nurse or a counsellor.

Talking to medical staff about your self-harm

People sometimes feel anxious about speaking to their doctors about self harm. They worry about being judged or having personal information passed on.

Everyone working for the NHS has a legal duty to keep information about you confidential. This includes the doctor, nurse and receptionist. It is possible that some medical professionals may say things that feel judgemental and that they may have certain opinions about the area of self-harm. If you feel that you've been treated unfairly or disrespectfully by a NHS staff member and would like to put in a complaint, [here](#) is a link to a web page that tells you how to do so.

Caring for yourself in other ways.

Some people hurt themselves so that they can then look after themselves, it provides a clear way of caring for themselves that they find hard to do in other areas of their lives. If this feels true for you and you'd like to find other ways of caring for yourself, see our info sheet called [From self-harm to self nurture](#)