

# VENICE PLASTIC SURGERY

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*Cosmetic, Reconstructive, Face, Breast, and Hand Surgery*

## **Wounds - Small may be big**

Often a patient is sent to the wound clinic with what appears to be a small ankle or foot wound. Sometimes it is no bigger than the head of a pin. It is draining though and has been there for months. These two facts indicate a much bigger problem than you may think. Usually it is a bone infection at this point in time.

Once it gets into the bone then surgery is usually indicated to scrape and clean that infected area of bone. It is unlikely to heal otherwise and will usually worsen. Gangrene may result.

I generally tell people that if the problem is there for more than three weeks it must be evaluated by the doctor. The area may heal then worsen again. This is the same as being a problem continuously. Do not be fooled because the area seemed to be healed for short periods of time. See your doctor now.

Preventative medicine is taking care of some smaller problem to prevent it from becoming a big problem. Why do so many people wait until the problem is out of control? This is also a day to day issue. That hot water heater is old and rusted. It is clearly going to fail very soon. It is surely best replacing it at your leisure, taking advantage of discount pricing and having it done at a convenient time. Instead, everybody will wait until it bursts and leaks everywhere. Now you have to call in the rug cleaner. You had several things lost because of water damage and you now have to call the plumber on an emergency basis getting extra charges and no discounts. Where is the savings waiting for the heater to break? Worse yet is that no repair technician is available for two or three days from now. The same thing may be a problem with medicine.

Most people call the doctor only when the problem is really bad. You call the office and cannot get an appointment for a week or more. Doctors can only effectively interview and examine patients at a reasonable speed. If every problem is an urgent one then the most urgent problem gets seen first.

Going to the emergency room is often the biggest wait. You come in with a really terrible ear ache. You delayed going there for several days and now it feels like the pain will kill you shortly. Unfortunately there are people in the emergency room with even more urgent problems. There is a severe heart attack patient, a shark bite victim, three people injured badly from a car accident and a badly burned cook from a grease fire. Even though you were there first another patient comes in and is seen before you because of an open leg fracture. They fell twenty feet off a roof.

The moral of the story is that you should get an appointment early in the course of an illness. The sooner one gets treatment the better the recovery and the less chance of secondary problems. Seeing a doctor in their office is always better than a random visit to the emergency room.

**The above represents the opinion of A. E. Haas, M.D.  
Venice Plastic Surgery, Venice Wound Center, Lakeside Medical Center**

**Just call us directly. No referral needed unless required by your insurance company**

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