

Contamination

- presence of non-replicating bacteria on wounds
- essentially all wounds are considered contaminated
- no antibiotics are necessary

Colonization

- bacteria adhere to base of wound and replicate
- does NOT impair healing
- does NOT require antibiotics

Critical colonization

- affects skin proliferation and tissue repair (wound demonstrates increased exudate, red/friable granulation tissue, + malodor)
- no systemic response
- topical antibiotics are appropriate

Biofilms

- complex community of aggregated bacteria embedded in polysaccharide matrix (debridement required)

Infections

- local or systemic response leading to infection
- quantitative bacteria count $> 10^5$
- clinical exam / wound culture