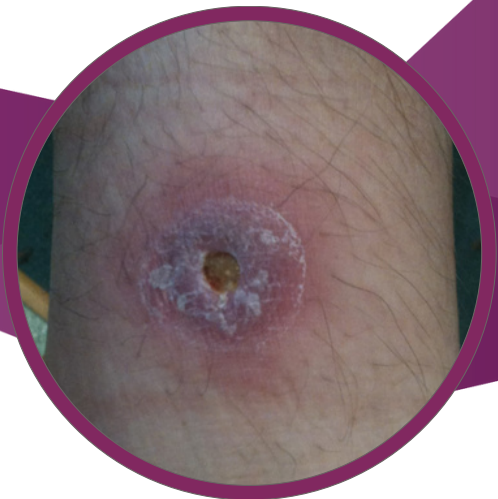


Barwon South West Public Health Unit

Buruli Ulcer - ALERT

Information for community members



Buruli ulcer (sometimes referred to as the Bairnsdale ulcer) is a skin disease caused by the bacterium, *Mycobacterium ulcerans*.

The toxins made by the bacteria destroy skin cells, small blood vessels and the fat under the skin, which causes ulceration and skin loss. These wounds are usually painless.

It is important that you see your GP as soon as possible if you have a slow-healing or suspicious skin lesion (wound). The lesions most commonly appear on your arms or legs.

***Mycobacterium ulcerans* has been found in soil, possum and other wildlife faeces, and on mosquitoes in affected areas. In the Barwon South West region, Buruli ulcer cases have been reported on the Bellarine Peninsula and Surf Coast region and in Geelong suburbs (Belmont, Highton, Newtown, Wandana Heights, Grovedale and Marshall and surrounds).**

Although the exact mechanism of infection in humans is still under investigation, the following precautions can reduce your risk:



Wear gardening gloves, long-sleeved shirts and trousers when working outdoors.



Avoid insect bites by using suitable insect repellents.



Protect cuts or abrasions with sticking plasters (band-aids).



Promptly wash, apply antiseptic and cover any scratches or cuts you receive while working outdoors.

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