

Be Wound Aware Education Series

How do I prevent wounds from happening and keep my skin healthy with Nurse Mel

Hi, I'm Nurse Mel. I'm a Clinical Nurse specialising in wounds. Today, I'm going to be talking about five important topics that help keep your skin healthy and how these practices can help you prevent wounds from happening.

Wound prevention and skin health

Number one: How do I prevent wounds or keep my skin healthy? So let's talk about something simple that makes a massive difference: keeping your skin healthy so that you can prevent wounds before they even start. Healthy skin is like a strong fence around your body. And when that fence is dry or cracked, things like germs, moisture, or friction can sneak in and cause you trouble, especially for older Australians, people with diabetes, or anyone with poor circulation. But the good news is that most wound prevention comes down to everyday habits, not expensive treatments. These things can include keeping your skin clean, using products that support your skin barrier, moisturising every day, protecting high-risk areas like your legs, heels, and skin folds, and catching changes early. So know the warning signs. Redness, dryness, and little cracks are warning signs. Skin health isn't glamorous, but it's life-changing. A few minutes of care each and every day can help prevent months of pain, infections, dressings, and even hospital visits.

Good cleaning practices

Number two is good cleaning practices. Good cleaning practices are often overlooked, but they're one of the easiest ways to keep your skin strong. You can start by using warm water. Don't ever use hot water. Hot water strips your skin's natural oils and leaves it dry and irritated. Shorter showers are also better, especially for people with fragile skin. When you're washing, avoid scrubbing or using rough cloths. Be gentle. Your skin is not a dirty saucepan. When you hop out of the shower, just pat your skin dry instead of rubbing. Rubbing can actually tear your delicate skin, especially on the arms and legs. Skip anything that leaves your skin feeling squeaky or tight. That means it's been stripped of the oils that it needs, so choose soft, soap-free, fragrance-free washes that clean without irritating. Good cleaning isn't just hygiene, it's damage prevention. So treat your skin kindly and it will stay stronger for longer.

Suitable pH washes

Using a pH-balanced wash is a very small change that can make a huge difference. Your skin naturally sits at a slightly acidic pH, which helps protect it from germs, dryness, and irritation. But when you use harsh, normal soaps, that pH can be thrown off and suddenly your barrier is under stress. That's why I recommend using a

pH-balanced wash, which is gentle and supportive for your skin barrier. You can find multiple options of these at your local pharmacy.

Moisturisers

Number four: Daily moisturisers. When and what do we use? If you want healthy skin, moisturising daily is absolutely essential, not optional. Think of moisturising as feeding your skin. It helps keep it flexible, resilient, and able to handle bumps, friction, and ageing. The best time to moisturise your skin is straight after your shower, while your skin is just slightly damp. This locks in the water and gives you better hydration with less effort. My advice is to go for a rich, nourishing cream rather than thin lotions. Some great options can be found at your local pharmacy.

Barrier cream

Number five: Barrier creams. When are they needed? Barrier creams are amazing because they act like a protective shield. Imagine them as a raincoat for your skin, perfect when moisture, friction, or irritation threaten to break it down. You should use a barrier cream when there's incontinence, when sweat collects in skin folds such as under the breast, tummy folds, groin, or armpits, when shoes, braces, or equipment cause rubbing, when redness is appearing and you want things to get better before they get worse, or when there's skin around a wound that's fragile and really needs some extra protection. You will find some great options at your local pharmacy. Stopping a problem before it starts is always better than fixing one.

Key Takeaways

So my three takeaways from today are:

- Keep your skin clean with gentle pH-balanced washes to protect your natural barrier.
- Moisturise daily after showering. This will help to keep your skin hydrated, flexible, and much less likely to tear.
- Use barrier creams when your skin needs that extra layer of protection.

And remember, you can ask your local pharmacist for advice on any of these products. They're always happy to help. Thanks