

Be Wound Aware Education Series

How should I take care of my wound at home

with Hayley Ryan

Caring for a wounded home can feel a bit daunting, but with the right steps, you can help it heal safely and confidently. Hi, I'm Hayley Ryan, clinical nurse consultant specialising in wound care. And today I want to share some simple, safe tips to help you care for your wound at home. Looking after your wound properly makes a big difference to how quickly and comfortably it heals.

Should I shower or should I not?

One of the questions we get asked all the time is should I shower or should I not? Well, the simple answer is you can usually shower, but it's important to protect your wound. Most dressings are splash resistant and not fully waterproof. That means they can handle a few light splashes, but shouldn't be soaked. Try to keep your wound out of direct water. You can use household items like cling wrap or a plastic bag for extra protection, but you do want to avoid baths, spas and swimming until your wound care clinician or doctor says it's safe to go back in. Soaking can actually slow healing and increase infection risk. After showering, what you want to do is gently pat the skin dry around your dressing. Never rub it. Always check the dressing and make sure it's dry and remains intact.

When do I change my dressing?

So when should you change your own dressing? Well, the first thing we would advise is to follow the plan given by your healthcare practitioner. That plan is made specific for your wound. Changing them too often can slow healing, but waiting too long can cause leakage or infection. And if your dressing is wet, lifting or even smells bad, it may be time to change it. Or call your healthcare professional.

How do I change my dressing?

Well, what do you do? Or how should you know when to change a dressing if it's really needed? Well, watch for simple signs that your dressing may need to be changed sooner rather than later. As I said earlier, is it wet, leaking or lifting off? Is there a bad smell? Does the wound look redder or is it more painful? Is there more fluid than usual? Do you feel unwell, or do you think you might even have a high temperature? If any of these signs happen, don't delay. Contact your healthcare provider for support.

Key Takeaways

My take home message from today is to

- Keep it clean,
- Keep it covered and
- Keep it healing.