



BE
WOUND
AWARE.

Are you wound aware?

Understanding and caring for your skin **makes all the difference**



This is a campaign by **WoundsAustralia**

Know and care for your skin!

Your skin is your body's main barrier against trauma from water, chemicals, germs, friction and pressure on the skin, and UV radiation. It regulates temperature, working with the brain to produce sweat that cools an overheating body or heat to warm a cooling body.



How the skin changes with age

Ageing skin is at greater risk of injury and takes longer to heal because:

- Collagen and elastin production decrease, making the skin more fragile.
- The layers of the skin begin to thin, reducing their protective powers.
- Older blood vessels are more prone to bruising and breaking.
- You may have more health conditions that slow the healing process.

The good news is that some skin care habits will help you minimise your risk of developing chronic wounds and improve their healing rates. These include:



Keeping hydrated to prevent dryness and maintain a moist wound healing environment.



Always cover up and use SPF50+ broad spectrum sunscreen to prevent sun damage and weakening of the skin.



Manage dry skin by using pH balanced and neutral soaps, shampoos, conditioners and moisturisers regularly.



Avoid shoes that are too tight and try not to spend too long standing or laying down – this can cause pressure injuries.



Inspect your skin daily for breaks, redness, or swelling, as catching changes early makes treatment simpler.



What is a wound?

A wound is any damage to or break in the surface of the skin

- They can be chronic (long-lasting) or acute (short-term).
- A result of accidents such as grazes, burns or skin tears.
- They can be the result of recent surgery.
- They can be the result of skin conditions such as eczema or psoriasis.
- They can be related to underlying diseases like poor circulation, diabetes, deep skin infection or chronic swelling like lymphoedema.



Types of Wounds

Chronic wounds

Any wound that takes more than 30 days to heal is considered chronic.

Chronic wounds need special care. Underlying conditions must be diagnosed and addressed for proper healing to occur.

Chronic wounds can include:



Venous leg ulcers



Diabetic foot ulcers

Seek advice from a healthcare professional like a nurse or doctor if:

- Your wound is taking more than 30 days to heal.
- Your wound smells bad, or feels hot.
- The affected limb is swollen.
- The skin around the wound is red and inflamed.
- The wound is oozing a thick yellow or green fluid.

Acute wounds

An acute wound is a sudden injury, such as a cut, burn, surgical incision, or skin tear. The normal wound healing process takes a few days to a few weeks.

Have an acute wound? What to do

- Wash hands **before** and **after** care.
- **Apply pressure** with a clean cloth to stop bleeding.
- Rinse with **clean or bottled water** and gently remove dirt.
- **Avoid** peroxide, iodine, alcohol, or soap.
- Cover with a **clean dressing** or **bandage**.
- **Change dressing** if wet, loose, or dirty.
- **Seek medical help** if the wound is deep or continuously bleeding.

Always follow your healthcare provider's instructions on the use of dressings, and seek medical advice if your wound is not healing, showing signs of infection or you are concerned.

Where to seek help and advice

Your GP

General Practitioners normally are most people's first point of contact. They can also refer you to other health professionals – such as diabetes educators, podiatrists or lymphoedema therapist – if necessary.

Wound Nurses

Specialist wound nurses have specific wound management training; you'll find them in hospital wound clinics, community nursing services and working in private practice, where they are known as 'wound care clinicians'.

Pharmacists

Pharmacists are a great source of advice on wound care products, disease prevention and the correct use of medicines. Many pharmacists have received further training to upskill in wound care and are readily accessible to help.

Other healthcare professionals

You may also get help and advice on caring for your wounds from other healthcare professionals, including educators, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers, and allied health professionals such as occupational therapists, dietitians, and physiotherapists.



Find more information
and support at:

www.woundaware.org



For full factsheets and more
details, scan the QR codes below:



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