
HOME-BASED WOUND CARE

CHECKLIST FOR PATIENTS, FAMILY MEMBERS OR CAREGIVERS



Caring for someone at home who is at risk of developing wounds

Some people have a higher chance of developing wounds because of health problems or skin changes. These wounds can be painful and difficult to heal, so prevention is very important.



Conditions that increase the risk of wounds

The risk of developing a wound is higher if the person has:

- Excess weight (obesity)
 - Problems with bladder or bowel control (urinary or bowel incontinence)
 - Heavy sweating
 - Diabetes
 - Older age
 - Difficulty moving or being mostly immobile
 - Trouble doing daily activities without help
 - A history of skin problems
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Signs that someone may be at high risk of getting a wound

Pay special attention if the person you care for:

- Needs help moving around or depends on others
- Sits or lies in the same position for more than 2–3 hours
- Complains of pain or discomfort in certain areas (heels, hips, elbows, or toes)
- Needs help changing position in bed or when moving to and from a chair
- Uses diapers or pads for incontinence
- Uses medical equipment that touches the skin (orthopaedic supports, breathing masks, catheters, feeding tubes, etc.)
- Wears tight shoes, especially if they have diabetes or if they have reduced feeling in their feet
- Has little appetite or is losing weight without trying

Even a small injury in these situations can quickly become a serious wound.

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Simple actions to help prevent wounds

These daily steps can make a big difference:



Check the skin every day – especially over bony areas (heels, hips, elbows) and where medical devices touch the skin.



Look for changes in the skin:

- On lighter skin: redness or warmth.
- On darker skin: darker or lighter patches, or changes in colour.
- Watch for very dry, flaky skin, especially on the feet if the person has diabetes.



If you see skin changes:

- Wash gently with mild, neutral products.
- Avoid rubbing or strong massage.
- Contact a healthcare professional for advice.



Encourage movement: Help the person change position regularly to relieve pressure on the skin.



Use skin care products only as advised by a nurse or doctor.



Support good nutrition: Provide varied and nutritious food. Ask your health care professional for advice (Detailed advice is provided in the resource 'Nutritional care: What you need to know')



Use special mattresses or cushions if prescribed.



Keep the home safe:

- Avoid carpets that may cause tripping.
- Keep hallways clear of obstacles.
- Ensure good lighting in every room.

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When to contact a healthcare professional

- If you notice a wound or open area on the skin, **contact a doctor or nurse immediately.**
- Clean the area gently with saline (salt water) if available and cover it with a soft dressing that does not stick to the wound.
- **Do not wait**, even small wounds can become serious very quickly.

