

# Your rights and expectations during wound treatment



Your clinical team will treat you with respect and dignity. That is your right as a patient. The Association for the Advancement of Wound Care (AAWC) has put together a list of what you should expect specifically during wound treatment.

As a wound patient, you have a right to:

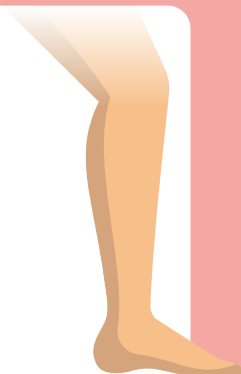
- > Actively participate as a member of your wound care team if you are able and willing
- > Have your wound assessed and monitored by trained healthcare personnel
- > Know what wound treatment options are available to you
- > Know the benefits, risks, and side effects of your wound care treatments
- > Participate in the development of your treatment plan with your wound care team
- > Receive timely and cost-effective wound treatment
- > Have your wound treated appropriately with safe and effective products
- > Have your pain adequately controlled
- > Seek other opinions about your wound treatment plan if you so desire and consult a specialist as necessary
- > Consult other healthcare professionals for advice about diet, exercise, therapy, or products

**If you are not sure whether your clinical team has taken all of these rights into account, please speak to your team leader.**



## Conclusion

Wound healing is a complex field but sometimes it takes second place to other treatments that you are undergoing, such as surgery. While your clinical team will certainly be trying to do the best for you while your wound is being treated, you have a right to have all your concerns addressed and all your important questions answered.



The questions listed here are a guide to make sure that you and your loved ones have a safe, comfortable and effective wound healing journey.

## Notes

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**Reference**  
AAWC Bill of Rights 2014

The International Patient and Carer Advocacy Panel is an initiative supported by the World Union of Wound Healing Societies and the Lindsay Leg Club Foundation. If you would like to receive more information about this panel and its aims and objectives, contact our secretariat: roland@opencitylimited.com



## Notes

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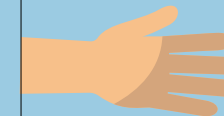
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Written by the International Patient & Carer Advocacy Panel, a wound care initiative supported by the World Union of Wound Healing Societies and the Lindsay Leg Club Foundation.

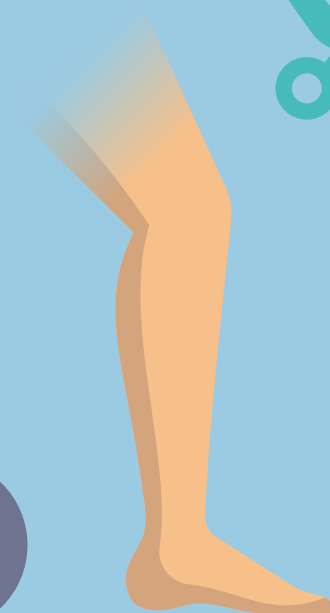
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# So, I have a wound. What do I need to know? What should I expect from my clinical team?



## Why is this leaflet important?

Normally when you think of a wound you might think of an injury, a cut or a burn that you might have to cover with a bandage.

Essentially, if it's not too deep, you just need to wait for it to heal. The time it takes to heal will depend on how serious the wound is. Sooner or later, just by protecting the wound and the surrounding area and not letting it get too dry or too wet or infected, you will be back to normal.

But wounds can sometimes be more complex than that.

There are different types of wounds and they will heal in different ways:

- > Some may heal on their own, but some may need specialist treatment. For example, you may find that you have a wound just after complex surgery, and that it needs specialist dressings to heal properly.
- > If you have diabetes or peripheral vascular disease, any wounds that you get, especially in the leg or the foot, might take much longer to heal.
- > Older adults or those with chronic illness or disability are also at risk of pressure ulcers from having been in one position for too long. Even though hospitals are well trained in ulcer prevention, it is important to be aware of the risks in both hospital and home settings.

This leaflet outlines what to expect during wound healing, along with the questions that you might want to ask the doctors and nurses who are treating you or your loved ones for a wound.

You should receive excellent clinical care while your wound is healing, but as with all aspects of health, it's good to know all the issues involved so that you can have all your concerns addressed.



## Why do I have a wound?



There are 4 main kinds of wound, each of which can be split further into many more different types:

1. Wounds from an acute injury such as cuts, bruises and abrasions
2. Wounds acquired as a result of surgery or other medical intervention
3. Burns
4. Chronic wounds, such as leg and foot ulcers, pressure ulcers or lymphoedema

The human body is very effective at repairing itself and wound healing goes through the following usual stages:

- > **Haemostasis:** Here, the objective is to stop the bleeding. The body activates its emergency repair system, the blood clotting system, and forms a dam to block the drainage.
- > **Inflammation:** This phase starts immediately after the injury and lasts 0–3, or up to 5 days in older adults. The signs include redness of and around the wound, heat, swelling and pain. This stage of healing is necessary to spark the process of new tissue development. If the redness and swelling does not reduce after a few days, or keeps increasing in size or pain, check with your health professional in case the wound is becoming infected.
- > **Proliferation:** In this phase new tissue is formed and starts filling in and/or closing the wound.
- > **Remodelling:** Even after the wound has completely closed over and appears healed, the new skin and tissue can take many months to fully remodel and regain its strength.

The overall length of time it takes to heal will depend on the severity of the wound.

However, in some wounds, eg chronic wounds where underlying conditions complicate healing, the healing process may get stuck. Extra clinical help may be needed in these cases to achieve healing.



## QUESTIONS FOR YOUR CLINICAL TEAM:

- > Why have I got a wound?
- > What kind of a wound have I got?
- > What does this mean about my overall health?

## How will my wound be treated?

Clinical help can come in many forms depending on the type of wound that you have. Here are some of the many treatments that are available:

- > **Debridement (removal of dead tissue)**
- > **Specialist wound dressings**
- > **Specialist creams**
- > **Topical antimicrobials (to treat or prevent infection)**
- > **Negative pressure wound therapy**
- > **Compression (to improve blood flow)**

There are many other types of therapy too. Your clinical team will advise you on which treatment or treatments you will need. You may still have several questions to ask.

## QUESTIONS FOR YOUR CLINICAL TEAM:

- > What kind of treatment will I need?
- > How long should the treatment last?
- > Will the treatment hurt?
- > Will my mobility be affected?
- > Will there be any other side effects?
- > What do I need to do to manage the treatment?
- > What are the risks of an allergic reaction to treatment?

## Who will be helping me manage my treatment?



Once you have started treatment there may be more than one person helping you to manage your wound. Here are some of the people who you might see during the process:

- > **Your consultant and their team**
- > **Your surgeon**
- > **Your general practitioner and practice nurse**
- > **Your specialist nurse**
- > **Your district nurse**
- > **A community support team (if available locally)**

All these people might have a role to play in your wound healing. Between them they will have developed a care plan, and it's important that everyone in your clinical team is aware of it.

## QUESTIONS FOR YOUR CLINICAL TEAM

- > Who are the team members who will be working with me?
- > Do they all know my care plan?
- > Has anyone from the team discussed the care plan with me?
- > Has anyone from the team fully addressed and understood my concerns?
- > Have the clinical team and care plan taken my personal needs into account?

