



2: CHRONIC WOUNDS: ARE YOU AT RISK?

www.woundaware.org

Every year, more than 450,000 Australians suffer with chronic wounds – that is, wounds that are slow to heal, heal only partially or return. While chronic wounds can happen to anyone, these factors put you at greater risk.

AGEING

Your risk of a wound becoming chronic increases as you age. This is because older people are more likely to live with conditions that can delay wound healing, such as underlying medical issues, complications caused by medication, and immobility.

Health and medical conditions

People with one or more of these conditions are at greater risk of chronic wounds:

- Diabetes (see factsheet 9)
- Obesity
- Cardiovascular disease
- Renal disease
- Lymphoedema.

There are also specific risk factors associated with different types of chronic wounds.

Pressure injuries

- Immobility and lack of activity
- Excessive moisture on the skin caused by, for example, sweating, incontinence, or an oozing or weeping wound
- An unhealthy diet
- Chronic illness
- Poor skin health.



THE WOUND WARNING SIGNS

- ✓ Hot and painful
- ✓ Smells bad
- ✓ Oozing thick yellow liquid
- ✓ 30+ days to heal



WOUND AWARE.ORG

Consumer education about chronic wounds by experts at the national peak body, Wounds Australia. Find more factsheets for consumers on our website.




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Continued...

Venous leg ulcers

Your risk increases if you have a history of:

- Deep vein thrombosis (DVT/blood clot) in the leg
- Pulmonary embolus (blood clot in the lung)
- Being overweight
- Multiple pregnancies
- Varicose veins
- Standing for long periods
- Restricted ankle movement
- Slow-to-heal leg wounds, or a family history of slow-to-heal leg wounds.


 See factsheet 11 for more information on venous leg ulcers.

Diabetes-related foot disease

Risk factors include:

- Previously undiagnosed diabetes (where the diabetes is diagnosed at the same time as the wound)
- Poorly managed or hard to manage diabetes
- Previous diabetes-related foot disease
- Peripheral vascular (decreased blood supply to the hands and feet)
- Peripheral neuropathy (nerve damage causing a decrease in or loss of sensation in the foot)

 See factsheet 9 for more information on diabetic foot ulcers.


 Chronic wounds can be costly, painful and debilitating. In factsheet 3, we'll look at the impact of living with a chronic wound.



ADVICE AND SUPPORT

Good sources of advice about wounds include:

- Wound care clinicians
- GPs
- Nurses
- Pharmacists
- Podiatrists
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers
- Diabetes educators
- Some allied health professionals such as dietitians, occupational therapists and physiotherapists.

 Find out more about healthcare professionals working with wounds in factsheet 6 on our website.

