



6: SOURCES OF PROFESSIONAL WOUND CARE ADVICE

www.woundaware.org

Many chronic wounds can be prevented or healed by getting the right advice early. There are lots of people who can give you reliable advice on wound healing, and many are free or, in Australia, covered by Medicare. Because chronic wound care can be complex, you may see a combination of these professionals, which is known as having a 'multidisciplinary care team'.

Your GP

A General Practitioner or family doctor is most people's first port of call. As well as referring you to other health professionals – such as diabetes educators or podiatrists – where necessary, GPs play an important role in monitoring the progress of chronic wounds, because you are likely to see them more frequently than some specialist doctors.

Pharmacists

Pharmacists are highly trained medical professionals and a great source of advice on wound care products and treatments, disease prevention and the proper use of medicines.

Nurses

As the name suggests, general practice nurses work alongside GPs in a general practice, and are really important in helping patients heal and stay healthy. Specialist 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'.

Diabetes Educators

Diabetes Educators are health professionals who help people self-manage their diabetes and prevent complications. Read more about diabetes and wound care in factsheets 9 and 10.



THE WOUND WARNING SIGNS

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



WOUNDARE.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...

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers

Medical professionals who provide culturally appropriate healthcare to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, they play a vital role in supporting individuals, families and community groups. Some have education and experience in diabetes.

Podiatrists

Podiatrists diagnose and treat conditions of the feet and lower limbs, and help with rehabilitation and prevention. Common wounds to these areas include diabetes-related and venous ulcers, and pressure injuries. Read more about good foot care in factsheet 10.

Other Allied Health professionals

Physiotherapists are qualified health professionals who diagnose, treat and prevent a wide range of health conditions and movement disorders. Your ability to move may be limited because of a chronic wound; physiotherapy may help repair damage, reduce stiffness and pain, increase mobility and improve your quality of life.

Occupational therapy supports you in engaging in the routine tasks of life. An occupational therapist will work with you to find modifications – to your behaviour, to a particular activity or to your environment – that help you live your life following a chronic wound. For example, they may help a person with an amputation adapt to manage daily chores.

A dietitian is a professional qualified to offer a range of services, such as individual dietary counselling, medical nutrition therapy, group dietary therapy and food service management. Diet has a significant impact on wound healing, and a dietitian will help you find the diet that will aid healing.



In factsheet 7, we'll look more closely at skin – the body's largest organ and our first line of defence against injury and infection.



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.

Care professional? Join Wounds Australia for events, guidelines, discounts and more:
woundsaustralia.org