

Self caring for your wounds

Patient information

Welcome to Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust Wound Clinics. These clinics are for non-housebound adults needing an assessment or review of their wound by a registered nurse or healthcare professional.

What can I expect?

Your wound will be assessed by a registered nurse to identify the best treatment plan - self caring. This will be discussed with you to ensure you are happy with the proposal.

You will be educated on how to care for your wound and given advice on how to change the dressing safely to minimise the risk of infection, how to monitor for signs of infection and who to contact if you have any concerns.

Your next appointment will depend on your wound, your symptoms and the clinical judgement of the healthcare professional at your initial visit. **You will be provided with enough dressings to last until your follow-up appointment.**

Appointment length and frequency will vary according to the type of wound you have; this will be determined by the clinic nurse.

Should you be unable to attend your appointment please

contact SPA **0300 300 7777** giving at least 24 hours notice of cancellation. This is to enable the appointment to be offered to someone else. Any patient who does not attend their appointment and has not cancelled it will be classed as 'Did Not Attend' (DNA) and be discharged from clinic.

Instructions

Below is a table indicating when dressing changes are required with some of our most frequently used dressings.

| Allevyn Gentle Border | Tegaderm Foam | Softpore |
|---|---|--|
|  No change |  No change |  Change |
|  No change |  No change | |
|  Change |  Change | |

Signs of wound healing

When you experience a wound on part of your body, it goes through specific wound healing stages. In general, smaller wounds heal more quickly, while large, deep wounds tend to take longer.

Initial swelling – Should last no longer than one week

You may notice a clear fluid coming from the wound, which helps to clean and disinfect the damaged skin. Redness, swelling, and tenderness may occur.

New tissue growth – Process normally lasts two -three weeks

After swelling subsides, new tissue should begin to form. You should see new skin forming over the wound and the exposed wound should shrink.

Scar formation

Deeper cuts, scrapes, and burns often result in scarring, which can last for several years. The initial scab is replaced by a scar, and you may notice that the new skin feels tougher and less elastic. Depending on the severity of the wound, the scar may gradually fade.

If you need help to understand this leaflet or would like it in a different language or format such as large print, Braille or audio, please ask a member of staff.

Use liquid soap



1
Palm to palm



2
The backs of hands



3
In between the fingers



4
The back of the fingers



5
The thumbs



6
The tips of the fingers

Rinse and dry thoroughly

How to change your dressing

The main principles of wound care are to prevent infection and promote healing. The following is a basic guide to looking after your wound:

- wash and dry hands thoroughly prior to dressing change
- carefully remove the 'old' dressing and discard
- cleanse the wound in warm tap water
- carefully dry around the wound – **do not touch the wound when drying, as fibres may get in and they will act as a focus for infection**
- inspect the wound for any signs of infection
- redress with a sterile dressing, sealing all edges
- wash and dry hands thoroughly
- If your wound requires a bandage this should be applied from joint to joint i.e. base of the toes to below the knee, wrist to elbow.

Signs of infection

A wound can easily become infected through many factors i.e not washing hands, touching the wound bed or leaving dressings off. The wound care principles described earlier will help prevent infection.

When dressing the wound, look for the following signs of clinical infection:

- redness spreading from the wound
- thick discharge/pus
- increased smell/offensive odour
- more wound fluid leaking than there had been previously
- increased pain and tenderness in the area
- fever
- no healing taking place (a cut should heal and scar within four weeks)
- bleeding not associated with a 'stuck' dressing
- increased heat/swelling in the area
- *typically wounds swell or redden slightly at the start of healing, but should improve after several days.

If three or more of the above signs are present, the wound needs assessing by a healthcare professional (contact SPA). You should also contact your GP to be reviewed for antibiotic treatment.

Dressing advice

You will be advised at your initial appointment how often you should change your dressing.

Evidence shows that changing the dressing too frequently can increase the risk of infection and disturb the new tissue growth. It is therefore important to protect your dressing by keeping it dry, clean and only changing in line with the advice from your healthcare professional.

As the dressing insitu absorbs, exudate will wick to the top of the dressing and discoloration will be noticeable.