

A wound is a break in the skin caused by a laceration (cut), abrasion (scrape), puncture, blister or incision (opening made during surgery or a medical procedure). Some wounds need stitches or glue to close them.

Caring for your wound is important to promote healing, avoid infection and minimise scarring. There are a number of things you can do to help your wound heal and prevent infection.

Different types of wounds require different dressing products and care. Your doctor or nurse will provide specific instructions and discuss a home dressing management plan.

Helping your wound heal

- It is important that anyone touching your wound have clean hands, this includes yourself. Washing with soap and water or alcohol based rubs are adequate.
- It is important to follow the instructions given to you by the doctor or nurse on the continued management of your wound.
- It is advised to avoid swimming or baths until the wound has healed or your specialist advises otherwise. Showering with a pH neutral, unscented, uncoloured soap is preferred.
- Ensure a healthy diet. A balanced diet will give you the building blocks your body need to heal a wound.
 - **Protein** provides building material for muscle and skin repair
 - **Carbohydrates** supply the energy needed for healing
 - **Milk and dairy products** are good sources of carbohydrates and protein
 - **Foods with Vitamin A** support skin repair and immune system
 - **Foods with Vitamin C** assist in collagen production and supports immune system

Protein	Milk / Dairy	Carbohydrates	Vitamin A	Vitamin C
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lean Pork • Lean Beef • Chicken • Fish • Beans • Lentils • Tofu • Nuts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk • Yogurt • Cheese 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wholegrain Breads • Wholegrain Cereals • Potatoes • Rice • Pasta • Fruit & vegetables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bright Orange Fruits • Bright Orange Vegetables • Dark Leafy Vegetables <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carrots - Spinach - Broccoli 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citrus Fruits <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Orange - Mandarin - Grapefruit

Simple wound care

- Never leave your wound open to “dry” unless specified by your specialist.
- Keep your wound protected from the sun.
- Watch for signs of infection – red, heat, increased pain, increased fluid output, smell, and swelling.
- Never leave a wet dressing on. It must be changed immediately.
- Do not remove steri-strips. Allow them to fall away. If corners become curled, these may be trimmed.

Discharging with a wound

- Split skin grafts – leave both the donor site and graft site dressing in place. Should you have any concerns or the graft site is wet contact your specialist or GP.
- In the event you need ongoing care of your wound, community nursing may be organised on your behalf. If you have any concerns regarding your continued wound care please liaise with your nurse prior to discharge.
- If you have sutures (stitches) or staples the nurse looking after you on the day of discharge will give you instructions regarding when they are to be removed and if they will be removed by your specialist or GP.

If you become concerned about your wound, present to the nearest hospital emergency department.