



Promoting the health and welfare of people with developmental disabilities
wherever they choose to live, work and spend their day.

Wound Care Basics

A wound is a bodily injury. A wound can be acute, healing sometime between two weeks and six months or chronic, meaning that it takes six months or longer to heal. Keeping wounds clean and dry, as well as relieving the area of pressure, can help to promote healing.

Factors that impair healing

- Advanced age
- Poor diet, not getting enough healthy food
- Being very over or under a healthy weight
- Poor circulation and breathing problems
- Any condition that hinders the immune system or its ability to fight off infection
- Smoking
- Incontinence, or the inability to control bladder or bowels
- Some medications, including steroids and radiation
- Ongoing health conditions such as diabetes
- Stress applied to the wound



How can I promote healing?

- Bathe and clean skin daily
- Keep wounded area dry
- Frequently relieve pressure on the wound
- Avoid harsh soaps and all powders; use doctor-approved moisturizer
- Encourage drinking water to keep skin hydrated
- Report changes in appetite that limit nutrition

When should a health care provider be contacted?

- If there is increased pain that radiates from the wound
- If there is an expanding redness around the wound or the wound is expanding
- If there is an increase in drainage from the wound
- If there is an odor coming from the wound, which can indicate dying tissue
- If the wound does not appear to be healing

Always share information about changes in appearance, pain or other symptoms with appropriate health care providers.

Always...

- Wash and dry skin and change clothing immediately after any leakage of stool or urine
- Pay attention to and document health changes
- Share information with other providers as appropriate to ensure continuity in care



Department of
Developmental Disabilities

What are pressure wounds?

Pressure wounds can be caused by friction or constant pressure on skin and tissue. They may also be caused by shearing.

Shearing occurs when two surfaces move in the opposite direction. For example, when a hospital bed is elevated at the head, a person may slide down in bed.

As the tailbone moves down, the skin over the bone may stay in place essentially pulling in the opposite direction. That motion may injure tissue and blood vessels, making the site more vulnerable to damage from sustained pressure.



How can I help prevent pressure wounds?

Pressure wounds are injuries to skin and underlying tissue that result from prolonged pressure on the area.

Bedsore most often develop on skin that covers bony areas of the body, such as the heels, ankles, hips and tailbone.

- Lean from side to side to relieve pressure on the buttocks
- Tilt from side to side to relieve pressure on hips and ankles
- Reposition frequently, about every two hours

Who are wound specialists?

They are nurses, physicians and physical therapists who work together to formulate a plan of care for acute and chronic wounds.

Who should see a wound specialist?

People with post-operative wounds, or wounds healing from a surgery

People with diabetic ulcers

People with pressure wounds or a history of pressure wounds

People with vascular ulcers

People with wounds caused by any adverse effects from radiation therapy

