

# Wellbeing and your wound

## Information for the patient

Most wounds will heal successfully and as expected, but others can take longer and affect wellbeing for a variety of reasons.

### What is a wound?

#### Definition –

A wound is any break or damage to your skin.

#### Wounds can be caused by:

- Injury
- Diabetes
- Pressure
- Surgery
- Burns
- Poor blood circulation
- Loss of feeling

### Why don't some wounds heal?

Most wounds heal by themselves, but some can take time. For healing, the wound needs the right environment to make more skin cells to fill in the gap left by the wound.

#### Successful wound healing needs:

- Energy from food
- Oxygen
- Good blood circulation
- Appropriate dressings
- Treatment of underlying conditions such as diabetes
- Good fluid management
- Good hydration
- Rest
- Relief from pressure

### Why is my wellbeing important?

Wellbeing is important because your wound healing and overall health can be affected if your wellbeing is not at the right level for both you and your wound.<sup>1-4</sup>

Wellbeing affects all areas of your life and can be loosely divided into four domains:

#### Physical wellbeing<sup>1</sup>

The ability to function independently in activities such as bathing, dressing, eating and moving around.

#### Social wellbeing<sup>1</sup>

The ability to participate and engage with family, society, friends and workers.

#### Psychological wellbeing<sup>1</sup>

Free from feelings of fear, anxiety, stress, depression or other negative emotions, and the ability to understand their condition.

#### Spiritual/cultural wellbeing<sup>1</sup>

The ability to experience and integrate meaning and purpose in life through connections with themselves and others.

### Assessing wellbeing

Your state of wellbeing across these domains can affect many things, including your:<sup>1</sup>

- Ability to look after yourself
- Ability to cope
- Wound healing progress
- Happiness and contentedness with life
- Financial and family stability



# Helping to improve the wellbeing of others

## Self-management and decision-making

### With your doctor, identify the factor affecting you most

This will give you both a clearer idea of how you can improve your wellbeing.

### Keep family and friends close<sup>5</sup>

The larger support network you have, the more help will be available when you need it.

### Knowing what you would most like to change or regain<sup>5</sup>

Knowing what you hope to achieve will help you and your doctor tailor your treatment plan to suit you.

### Follow advice and instructions<sup>1</sup>

The information is designed to help you and following it closely may mean the success of your treatment.

### Accept help and advice

If you have identified problems with your wound care, you should consider speaking to someone.

### Keep a record<sup>1</sup>

Write down your feelings, your general health and your wound progress.

### Set yourself goals<sup>5</sup>

Goals can be daily, weekly, monthly or even yearly. Goals will give you something to work towards and once you achieve one, you'll feel empowered to get going on the next.

## What is self-management and shared decision-making?

**Self-management** is your ability to follow the treatment plan set by your doctor, especially the aspects of wound care you can try to do by yourself.<sup>1</sup>

**Shared decision-making** is having an active involvement in decisions made about your treatment and care.<sup>1</sup>

The more time and commitment you invest in your wound care, the more likely it is that you will have a smoother wound healing process. And the more involved you are in your wound care and decision-making, the more empowered you will feel to take steps to improve your wellbeing.<sup>1</sup>

### Remember that:

- You have a right to discuss your wellbeing with your doctor/nurse and you should feel comfortable voicing your expectations and worries about treatment<sup>1</sup>
- You should try to take an active role in the decisions made about your treatment and commit to participating in the management of your wound<sup>1</sup>
- You should expect to be offered choices in treatment and flexibility in care delivery<sup>1</sup>
- You can reflect on the care you have had and provide suggestions for how services might be adapted<sup>1</sup>

## How should my doctor or nurse help?

You should be following a treatment plan you have discussed with your doctor. However, if you feel you need the advice of a doctor or nurse, or even a referral to a specialist, it is important you seek help. Because of their wound, many people worry about what others may think of them, but you are not alone in your situation and most doctors and nurses will have treated many wounds like yours before. They are there to help – to provide treatment, to listen to you and to address your concerns.<sup>1</sup>

You can expect your doctor or nurse to:<sup>1</sup>

- Ask about your wellbeing and you as a person, not just ask about your wound
- Prioritize your wellbeing in the assessment and treatment of your wound
- Involve you in your care by offering you a choice in your treatment options, as well as providing the appropriate information and support
- Use your feedback to adapt their plans and services
- Ensure that they know when and who to refer you to if you need further assistance

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