

Caring for your wound at home

Once you leave hospital, you will be visited at home by a nurse from the post-acute nursing service twice a week. Times may vary from patient to patient.

What is a wound?

Wounds are incisions (cuts), lacerations (rugged cuts) or abrasions (grazes or scratches). You now require ongoing wound care because of your injury or surgery.

Treatment

There are different ways to dress or bandage a wound. Your doctor or nurse will choose the best treatment and dressing for you.

In an emergency

In an emergency such as excessive bleeding, sudden pain or swelling, difficulty breathing, contact 000 to attend the emergency department.

During your first appointment, your nurse will give you a spare dressing. If this doesn't happen, please ask. This spare dressing may be used if your current dressing:

1. becomes more than half wet with fluid
2. leaks fluid
3. has lifted and become loose
4. has become wet while showering
5. is too uncomfortable.

Changing your dressing

Gently remove the soiled dressing. If possible, place it in a plastic bag and bring it with you to your next visit.

Gently wash the wound and lightly pat it dry with a clean towel. If you are unsure about washing your wound, keep the area around the wound dry and apply the clean dressing.

If your wound is packed and the material becomes dislodged while removing the dressing, cover the wound with the clean dressing provided and call 4433 9933 for further advice. After hours, you may attend your GP or the emergency department.

What to expect

Wounds may be painful, swollen, red and sometimes can bleed. The pain is usually mild and symptoms should ease in two or three days.

Take simple pain medication as allowed such as paracetamol or medication prescribed by your doctor or nurse. If the pain is severe despite taking pain medication, discuss with your nurse on 4433 9933. If your nurse is unavailable, leave a message and/or see your GP. The nurses who visit you do not carry pain medication.

If you have changed your dressing between staff visits, even with your spare dressing, please advise staff on 4433 9933 or at the next visit.

Your nurse will advise you on any follow-up appointments required with your GP or the hospital.

Make sure you watch for signs of infection such as:

- increasing pain despite taking pain medication
- a warm, red and swollen wound or redness spreading to the surrounding skin
- surrounding skin becoming hot to touch or swollen, red or painful
- pus (yellow or greenish discharge) or an unpleasant smell
- a tender lump in the groin or armpit near the wound
- fever or flu-like symptoms
- the wound is not healing or closing.

If you have any concerns firstly, please contact 4433 9933 seven days per week, between 8am and 4:30pm.

If your call goes to message bank, please leave a message with your name and contact number and we will call you back.

After hours, you may also phone 13HEALTH (13 43 25 84) or see your GP.

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This patient information brochure supports National Safety and Quality Health Service Standard 2 - Partnering with Consumers



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