



## Wound Care at Home



### Overview

Whether you have a chronic skin ulcer, a surgical wound or some other skin injury, proper wound care is important. Without it, even a minor skin wound can turn into a big problem. If your doctor has given you a wound care plan, follow it carefully. Let's also review some wound care basics.

### Keep your hands clean

First, keep everything clean. Always wash your hands before you touch your wound, the skin around it or the wound dressing. Wash your hands with soap, or use an approved hand sanitizer.

### Removing wound dressing

When it's time to change your wound dressing, remove it carefully. Then, wash your hands again. Now gently clean your wound and the skin around it with a saline solution. Or, you can use mild soapy water. Don't use alcohol, peroxide, iodine or skin cleaners. Don't use antibacterial soap. Don't use any creams, lotions or other products not recommended by your doctor. Dry your wound by gently patting it with a soft, dry cloth or gauze.

### New dressing

Now, carefully put on the new dressing. Use only a clean dressing. When you're done, wash your hands again.

### Get help

And finally, watch closely for signs of infection, like swelling, weeping and changes in skin color. Is your wound failing to heal, even after a few weeks of home care? Do you have a fever? These are serious problems that need medical attention. Your doctor will create a plan that's right for you.

