



# Skin Tear Management

## Information for Patients, Residents and Carers

### What is a Skin Tear?

A skin tear is an injury caused by shearing, friction or blunt trauma leading to the separation of the skin layers.

### First aid for skin tears

It is important to let your carer or family member know that you have a skin tear. They may need to assist you with cleaning and applying a dressing.

**Control bleeding** through wound elevation and using a clean cloth to apply light pressure to the area until bleeding stops (this may take a few minutes or longer if on blood thinning medication)



**Wash your hands** well prior to dressing the wound to help prevent contamination.



**Rinse the wound** with clean lukewarm water.



**Gently pat the wound dry** with a clean pad or towel.



If the skin flap is still attached, gently **reposition the skin back over the wound** as much as possible, using a cotton bud or moist pad. Do not cut the skin flap off.



**Cover the wound** with a clean, non-stick dressing and lightly bandage in place.



**Avoid using tape** to prevent further skin damage.

## Contact your health professional

Contact your health professional or the Wound Innovations team as soon as possible for advice and if:

- you are unable to reposition the skin
- the wound is contaminated e.g. dirt
- the wound is not healing
- you have underlying medical conditions

Contact emergency services or seek urgent care if:

- you are unable to control bleeding
- the wound is large and deep
- you have another injury or hit your head at the time of injury (you may have a concussion or fracture)
- there is a risk of further injury

## Other brochures also available:

- Skin Tear Prevention
- Maintaining Healthy Skin

## Aftercare

It is important that you continue to manage the care of your skin tear to ensure healing:

- Leave the dressing on for 48 hours or as instructed by health professional (unless there are signs of infection)
- Keep dressing clean and dry

Protect the area from further trauma; consider clothing or other devices that protect the skin (e.g. limb protectors).

## Signs of Infection

Skin tears can become infected. Contact your health care professional or Wound Innovations if you experience any of the following signs:

- Pain
- Swelling
- Heat
- Redness
- Pus
- Odour

## Contact Information

Wound Innovations: [1300 224 034](tel:1300224034)

[reception@woundinnovations.com.au](mailto:reception@woundinnovations.com.au) [www.woundinnovations.com.au](http://www.woundinnovations.com.au)

## References

Wound Innovations. (2018). Essentials of Skin Tear Management Online Education Module. QLD, Australia: Wound Innovations.

LeBlanc K et al. (2018). Best practice recommendations for the prevention and management of skin tears in aged skin. Wounds International. Available to download from [www.woundsinternational.com](http://www.woundsinternational.com)

Lewin, G. F., Newall, N., Alan, J. J., Carville, K. J., Santamaria, N. M., Roberts, P. A.; Identification of risk factors associated with the development of skin tears in hospitalised older persons: a case-control study, *Int. Wound J.* 2016 Dec; 13:1246-1251.

National Health and Medical Research Council. (2013) Australian Dietary Guidelines Summary [National Guidelines]. Canberra, Australia: National Health and Medical Research Council.

**DISCLAIMER:** This document is intended to be used as a guide of general nature, having regard to general circumstances. It cannot be comprehensive and is intended as a guide only. This document reflects information available at the time of its preparation, but its currency should be determined having regard to other available information. The information presented should not be relied on as a substitute for medical advice, independent judgement or proper assessment by a doctor, with consideration of the particular circumstances of each case and individual needs. Wound Innovations disclaims all liability to users of the information provided.