

WHY WE HAVE WOUND AWARENESS WEEK

Healthcare specialists are one of the most trusted people in anyone's life. Wounds Australia encourages its members to use the opportunity it presents and play a key role in helping people understand the risks and treatment options for chronic wounds.

By providing resources and services for its members, Wounds Australia helps remove barriers to delivering excellent care and the satisfaction of knowing you've made a difference in someone's life.

Learning how to reassure someone their chronic wounds can heal with the right treatment is just one of the skills that Wounds Australia can enhance through expert advice.

Whether in hospital or the community, your patient is likely to feel stress related to a chronic wound, particularly if they've had it for a prolonged period, it has returned, or it is not their first chronic wound.

They could be embarrassed by the odour or drainage from the wound and they might decrease their contact with family and friends, leaving them feeling alone and isolated. By acknowledging these feelings and helping your patient explore options for emotional and psychological support, you will be seen as a genuine partner in their care and recovery.

Chronic wounds can be quite painful, and pain can cause slower wound healing. Types of pain include chronic background pain, pain during wound treatment and even anticipatory pain before treatment commences.

Managing and reducing pain is important to aid wound healing, so assess the pain and speak to an appropriate doctor regarding analgesia. You should continue to assess pain and analgesia as healing continues and communicate with your patient.

For many people, the cost of dressings and wound treatment may be prohibitive or cause some hardship. This can create additional stress.

If your patient cannot afford to use the most appropriate wound treatment healing may be delayed. Rather than avoiding a conversation about finances, discuss treatment options and help them understand the impact of treatment on healing time. If they understand some treatments can deliver faster healing and prevent longer term costs, you will have helped them feel more in control about making choices.

Explain that some wounds require specialist care from more than one type of health professional is also important. For example, a diabetic ulcer might require input from a doctor (specialist or GP), a wound care nurse and a podiatrist or diabetes educator. Make the appropriate referrals, explaining to the patient the reason for involvement of each team member.

Using the trust patients give you to deliver trustworthy advice will make you a better healthcare professional.

More information on Wounds Australia and its resources and services is at www.woundsaustralia.com.au

ENDS

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