

WOUND AWARENESS WEEK HIGHLIGHTS THE RISKS AND WARNING SIGNS OF CHRONIC WOUNDS

The peak body for wound prevention and management, Wounds Australia, has launched its largest ever public health campaign to raise awareness of the nation's 'hidden epidemic' of chronic wounds.

Figures released by Wounds Australia on the opening day of Wound Awareness Week 2021 shows \$3 billion is spent annually on wound treatment in hospitals, clinical settings and aged care facilities.

Wounds Australia Chair Hayley Ryan said the impact of chronic wounds on Australia was "massive", despite the problems being largely unknown.

"Over 420,000 people suffer from chronic wounds each year and they will spend an average of \$340 per month on dressings and painkillers.

"Chronic wounds also damage mental health. They stop people from working, studying and enjoying activities others take for granted.

"However, the solution to chronic wounds for thousands of Australians is bleeding obvious.

"By simply knowing the warning signs and understanding who is at risk, chronic wounds can be avoided or be quickly healed by talking to a healthcare professional.

"While anyone at any time can be afflicted by a chronic wound, older Australians and people with health complications are most likely to suffer. Sadly, they are also the people who are least able to afford treatment.

"That's why Wounds Australia wants older Australians and their family to know help is available," Hayley Ryan said.

Page 1 of 2 - More information on warning signs, risk factors and where to seek help is over the page

Warning signs that an ordinary wound has become a chronic wound include:

- taking more than a month to heal or returning for no apparent reason
- pain and Heat
- an unpleasant Odour
- a thick, yellowish fluid.

The greatest risk factors are people who are:

- over 65 years
- suffering from chronic diseases like diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and renal disease
- struggling with poor mobility
- obese.

Healthcare professionals qualified to give advice and treatment include:

- Doctors
- Nurses
- Pharmacists
- Podiatrists
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers
- Diabetes Educators
- Some physiotherapists, occupational therapists and dieticians.

ENDS

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DETAILS OF INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES OVER PAGE

Details on Wound Awareness Week is available at: WoundAware.com.au

Information on Wounds Australia is available at: WoundsAustralia.com.au

Spokespersons for Wound Awareness Week 2021 are:

PROFESSOR FIONA WOOD AM FAHMS (Wound Awareness Week Ambassador)

Professor Wood is one of Australia's most innovative and respected surgeons and researchers. She is a highly skilled plastic and reconstructive surgeon and world leading burns specialist. Professor Wood has pioneered research and technology development in burns medicine, including 'spray on skin' to treat the 2002 Bali bombing victims. Professor Wood was named Australian of the Year in 2005 and a 'National Living Treasure' in 2014.

HAYLEY RYAN CNC (Chair, Wounds Australia)

Hayley is a leading educator in the Australian and New Zealand health and aged care sectors on the principles of wound management and infection control. Her specialities include chronic wound management, palliative wounds and pressure injury prevention. Hayley's expertise was central to the development of Wounds Australia's *11-Point Plan* and response to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

BLAKE WILSON (Wounds Australia CEO)

Blake's reputation as a reformist CEO has been enhanced by his work with Wounds Australia. He has built partnerships to make Wounds Australia a force in shaping efficient and effective healthcare, expanded the reach of Wound Awareness Week, and connected the wound care's commercial sector and other advocacy organisations.

ABOUT WoundsAustralia

Wounds Australia is the peak body for chronic wound prevention and management.

Membership comprises thousands of doctors, nurses, podiatrists, Aged Care workers and other professionals vital to treating chronic wounds and caring for patients.

Wounds Australia works to reduce the harm caused by wounds by supporting members with resources and continuous education. Wounds Australia works with governments and industry to improve wound management, knowledge and resources.