



# THE ISSUE OF CHRONIC WOUNDS

## At the end of today

- ❖ You will:
  - ❖ Understand the important role of skin
  - ❖ Know how to promote healthy skin
  - ❖ Have some skin 'first aid' tips
  - ❖ Understand more about chronic wounds
  - ❖ Be a Champion for Skin Integrity

# QUESTION??

❖ **WHAT IS THE LARGEST ORGAN OF THE BODY???**

# YOUR SKIN!!!

- ❖ **3.5kgs skin/2sq meters/3layers**
- ❖ **Shed 40,000 cells/minute**
- ❖ **First line of defence**
  
- ❖ **Must protect it!!**
- ❖ **Avoid sun and chemical exposure**
- ❖ **Moisturise!!!**

## ❖ **WHAT IS THE FUNCTION OF SKIN??**

- ❖ **Protection**
- ❖ **Sensation or feeling**
- ❖ **Temperature control**
- ❖ **Metabolism of Vitamin D**
- ❖ **Elimination of waste**
- ❖ **Communication**
- ❖ **Barrier to infection**

## ❖ WHAT IS A CHRONIC WOUND??

### ❖ A WOUND THAT HAS FAILED TO HEAL OR TO REACH ANATOMICAL AND FUNCTIONAL INTEGRITY <sup>1</sup>

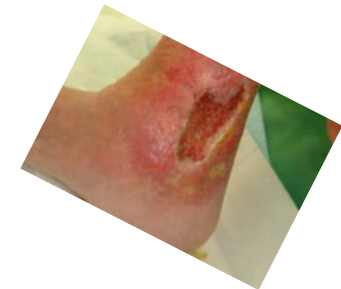
- Arterial Ulcers
  - Venous Leg Ulcers
  - Diabetic Foot Ulcers
  - Pressure Injuries
- 
- ~ 420,000 chronic wounds in Australia

❖ **Costs are very high > \$3.5 billion AUD!!! <sup>1</sup>**

1. McCosker, L., et al., International Wound Journal, 2019:16:84-95

## QUESTION??

- ❖ Wounds such as skin tears, pressure injuries and leg ulcers increase in incidence as we mature
- ❖ Why???
  - skin becomes thinner
  - decreased sensation & increased dryness
  - decrease in ability to control body temperature
  - reduced immune response



## ❖ CHECK OUR SKIN DAILY FOR

❖ Skin changes

❖ Bruising

❖ Rashes

❖ Wounds



## ❖ SKIN CARE TIPS

❖ *It is not just about your skin!!!*

❖ *Fluids and food are important*

❖ **What if I get a wound?**

❖ *Fluids and food are important*

**How can I tell if a wound is getting better  
or worse?**

## A healthy wound:

- Is pink or ruddy beefy red in colour
- Has no obvious smell
- Exudating small to moderate amounts of clear or serous fluid
- Surrounding skin is warm, (not hot or cold) to touch, and looks like 'normal' skin - relative to genetics and environmental conditions
- No pain
- Free of infection



## Unhealthy wounds may be:

- very malodourous
- greenish in colour, necrotic or covered in thick yellow slough
- produce large amounts of exudate
- surrounding skin is red and hot to touch
- usually very painful or increased pain
- Person: 'feels' unwell, tired, lack interest in food & normal activities of daily living, feverish



**Please be a**

**Champion for Skin Integrity**



# Where is the evidence?

**Wounds Australia** <http://awma.org.au>

**Royal College of Nursing: UK** <http://www.rcn.org.uk/>

**National Guideline Clearinghouse** <http://www.guideline.gov/>

**National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE)** <http://www.nice.org.uk/>

**Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN)** <http://www.sign.ac.uk/>

**Australasian Cochrane Centre - The Cochrane Library** <http://www.cochrane.org.au/library/>

**National Health Medical Research Council:**

[http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/health\\_guidelines.htm](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/health_guidelines.htm)

**The Joanna Briggs Institute** <http://joannabriggs.org/>

**Registered Nurses Association of Ontario** <http://www.rnao.org/>

**Wounds UK** <http://www.wounds-uk.com/>

**Wounds International** <http://www.woundsinternational.com/clinical-guidelines>

**EWMA Consensus Documents** <http://ewma.org/english/position-documents.html>