

**BRIGGS®**

**WOUND  
CARE**  
PATIENT  
EDUCATION  
GUIDE

**STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY**

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# Understanding Your Wounds

This booklet is designed to help you, your family and caregiver better understand the different types, complications, prevention and care of wounds.

It is important for you, your family, caregivers and your health care providers (doctors, nurses, pharmacist, suppliers and other health care professionals) to work as a team and be involved in managing your wound. By working with your wound care team and following a few simple guidelines, your wound may heal faster and your quality of life will improve. Be sure to ask questions, voice your concerns and needs, and understand what is being done and why.

Wounds can either be a chronic (long-lasting) or an acute (short-lasting) condition. Reports indicate that 3% of Americans over the age of 65 have ulcers and/or wounds, mainly affecting the legs and feet. Chronic wounds affect around 10.5 million people.

It is important for you, your family and caregivers to be able recognize and report the symptoms of infected and non-healing wounds. You can keep your doctors and nurses updated on your condition and receive appropriate and timely treatment and intervention, as well as prevent complications.

Keep this booklet as a resource for yourself, your family and caregivers. It contains numerous forms that can be used to write down your vital signs, medicines, wound care treatments and other important information, as well as a place for you to record questions for your next visit with your nurse, therapist or physician.

Since this booklet addresses different types of wounds, not all of the information will necessarily apply to you. Your home care nurse or therapist will mark your wound type(s) on page 2 of this booklet.

Please ask questions as your home care professional reviews with you the information contained in this booklet. Feel free to call our office if something is unclear or if you have questions or concerns.

# Wound Care Patient Education Guide

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Rev. 2/24

**This booklet is for informational purposes only** and is not designed to replace your physician's advice or treatments. The information contained in this booklet may change, as practice guidelines change. Not all of the information contained in this booklet may apply to your type of wound(s).

**Disclaimer:** We have attempted to make the information contained in this booklet as accurate as possible; however, MedForms, Inc., makes no guarantees as to its accuracy and assumes no liability for the use of its forms and publications.

**Research Resources:** Department of Health and Human Services; National Institutes of Health

# SECTION 1. Your Wound Care Team

We are a health care team and by working together, we can do everything possible to promote wound healing, so you can have a better quality of life.

The number one goal of your wound treatment is to heal the wound. While dressings play an important role in healing a wound, the factors that caused the wound have to be eliminated or brought under control. You must comply with the treatment that your physician has ordered so that your wound can heal.

## **YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES**

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You and your caregiver have the responsibility to:

- Be active in your care;
- Learn how to perform your wound care;
- Know what symptoms to report to your home care nurse, therapist and/or your doctor;
- Understand how to tell if the treatment is working;
- Be an active participant in wound care treatment changes;
- Ask questions if you do not understand the wound care treatment plan;
- Ask questions if you do not understand the instructions provided by your wound care team;
- Follow your prescribed diet; and
- Take your medications as ordered.

It is not unusual for patients and caregivers to experience stress and strain when caring for wounds. Try using stress relief measures such as deep breathing exercises, recreational activities (painting, reading, knitting, etc.) or watching funny movies that will make you laugh and relax.

## SECTION 2. Types of Wounds

Wounds are generally classified into the three categories listed below. Your wounds are: *(Nurse/therapist: check all that apply)*

- Pressure Ulcer**       **Vascular Ulcer**       **Surgical Wound**  
 **Traumatic**       **Other:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **PRESSURE ULCER**

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A pressure sore (also called a decubitus ulcer or a bedsore) can range from minor skin reddening to deep craters extending to the muscle and bone.

Tiny blood vessels provide oxygen and nutrients to the skin. When the blood vessels are squeezed too long due to unrelieved pressure on the skin, the tissue dies and a pressure ulcer forms. Pressure ulcers can even be caused by slight rubbing or friction on the skin.

Certain areas of your body are more prone to develop pressure ulcers than others. These areas are called pressure points. The most common pressure points are the lower back (tailbone or sacrum), hip bones and heels. Pressure ulcers can also develop on the spine, back of the head, shoulder blades, ankles, knees, elbows and ears.

#### **Pressure Ulcer Risk Factors**

The more risk factors you have, the greater your chances of developing pressure ulcers. Risk factors include:

- Chair, wheelchair or bed confined;
- Unable or inability to move due to coma, paralysis, hip fracture, etc.;
- Lack of bowel and bladder control (moisture irritates the skin);
- Poor nutrition (skin is unhealthy);
- Decreased mental awareness; and
- Lack of feeling/numbness over pressure areas

You can lower your risk by following the guidelines outlined in this booklet and by following your health care provider's instructions.

### **TRAUMATIC WOUND**

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There are three categories of traumatic wounds: Acute, cut and penetrating.

- An acute wound is a tear or rip of the skin and usually contains debris such as gravel, glass, dirt, metal or sand.
- A cut is caused by a sharp object, such as a knife, breaking the skin.
- A penetrating wound is considered the most severe. They are usually deep and can result in internal damage. Examples are an animal bite, gunshot, impaled object or stab wound. Treatment depends on the severity and type of traumatic wound. Some require surgical intervention while others only require a dressing. It's important to seek medical care to evaluate the extent of the damage.



# This file is just a small sample of this booklet

## Our Patient Education Series offer:

- A simple solution for the education of individuals and family for common health conditions and issues
- A tool for smooth transitions between care settings
- Documentation tools to track compliance and record information (i.e., medications, appointments, diet)
- Guidance for lifestyle changes and other interventions to help with day-to-day management
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