

WIN WOUNDS IN NEED

Helping Patients and Caregivers Succeed!








AAWC wants to thank our members with a gift of an AAWC WIN Pin (worth \$10)



All you have to do is provide your name, address and caregivers name along with brief text on how you appreciate your caregiver to kstrauss@aawconline.org. The two pins will be mailed as gifts for you and your caregiver at no cost.

Look to the AAWC WIN Winter Newsletter in February where your thank-you message will be posted.

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WIN is the patient/caregiver membership of the Association for the Advancement of Wound Care (AAWC). AAWC (www.aawconline.com) is dedicated to improving the care of open wounds.

National Caregivers Month

It is fitting that November is National Caregivers Month, the same month as Thanksgiving! It is the time of year to show your appreciation. It could be as simple as letting her/him know they are a great caregiver or noting your caregiver by name in the Thanksgiving counting of the blessings.

There are many ways to thank your caregiver and many don't have to cost anything. Here are a few:

- * Write a thank you note
- * Give a big hug

- * Offer a "sleep late" day
- * Arrange some free time out of the house
- * If able, make a small easy meal or treat as a surprise.
- * Have a movie night where your caregiver picks a movie
- * Give something from the heart, maybe you own a keepsake or photo that would have meaning to your caregiver.

You may need to ask for help from another family member, neighbor or friend to make plans. Don't be afraid to ask, others want to help but don't know how.



Dear AAWC WIN,

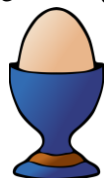
How can I still enjoy the holidays with my wound?

Dear Reader:

We all deserve a break sometimes, and the holidays are meant to be enjoyed with your friends and family. It might be hard to have a wound and be in places with a lot of people. Sometimes you might be afraid that someone will see your dressing, that it will leak, or that there will be an odor. It might be hard to know what you can eat or how to wear your favorite holiday dress, too. Here are some tips to help you feel great during the holidays!

1. Talk to your healthcare provider about your holiday plans. Tell him or her what you are afraid of or what you want to enjoy. If it is possible, they might be able to help you come up with a plan so that you can still do some of the things you want to do, even if it means a short break from your usual wound treatment.

2. If you are diabetic and have a wound, it might help you to eat a small healthy snack full of protein before you go to a holiday party where there will be a lot of unhealthy food. You can try some turkey, an egg, or some ham. This will help you



Ask the Nurse

feel less hungry so that you can avoid foods that are not good for you. It might also help you to drink a glass of water before you go or while you are there. Try to eat foods that have a lot of protein, like meat or eggs, or vegetables like celery or cucumber. Only have very small bites of foods that are high in sugar like bread, pasta, cookies, candy, and fruits.

3. If you have a special boot or shoe, it might be fun to decorate it! Some people like to use ribbons, stickers, or glitter to make their shoe festive and fun. Just make sure that your decorations can be taken off after the holiday!

4. If you want to wear a nice outfit but are afraid that your dressing will show or leak, your healthcare provider might be able to help you find a way to use a more absorbent or skin-colored dressing temporarily. Ladies, if you wear compression wraps, some people like to put panty hose over them. This might help you feel great about wearing a dress or skirt even with your bandage or dressing! Or maybe this is the year to change your style and buy a pair of wide-legged flowing pants. Men may want to have a pair of pants tailored to accommodate a large compression wrap or cast.

5. If you are supposed to be elevating your leg to improve your circulation, you may feel that you cannot leave your house. Instead of staying home, find ways to sit and elevate your leg at a friend's house or at a party even for 30 minutes at a time. You don't want your wound to go backwards, but at least try to maintain the wound during the holiday times.

6. If you have a wound that makes you stay in bed to get the pressure off of it, perhaps a party can come to you. Or maybe the host of the party can help you to lie on a couch so that you can enjoy the party and get a change of scenery. Be very careful going to and coming home from the party so that you minimize damage to the wound.



Having a wound is not something to feel ashamed of but we understand that like any other disease, it can be uncomfortable when you are around people you don't know well. It is important to take very good care of your wound and your body around the holidays, but there are also ways to be able to have fun with your wound!

About the Author: Karen Bauer NP-C, CWS, CHRN - AAWC Consumer Board Member



www.webmd.com/skin-problems

People who have wounds often have an interest in other skin conditions. Psoriasis is a skin condition that many people have heard of, either from friends or family who have psoriasis or from TV commercials for medicines to treat this disease.

You cannot catch psoriasis from someone, you are born with it.

The most common type of psoriasis is called *plaque psoriasis*. It looks like thick red patches on the skin with silver-white flakes called “scales” or “plaque” that fall off. The patches are due to skin cells that form in large numbers and pile up on the top of the skin. These patches can grow slowly or quickly, and can appear and vanish. They can also form in the mouth and on the lips, and can even change organs inside the body. About 3% of people in the whole world suffer from some form of psoriasis. It affects men and women equally.

Psoriasis is with a person for a long time and can be controlled but not cured with medicine and care. Many people who start with skin or plaque psoriasis will get psoriatic arthritis.

This disease often occurs with other health issues such as arthritis, cardiovascular or heart disease, inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) and other intestinal

diseases, metabolic syndrome, emotional disorders, and periodontal (mouth) diseases.

These patches can be ugly to look at, and people with psoriasis often feel very self-conscious about their skin.

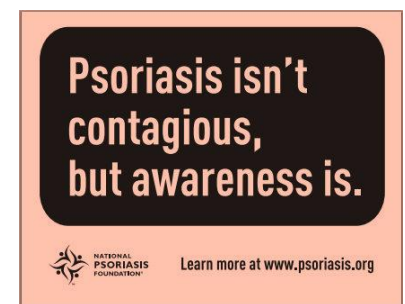
People with this disease have to learn what causes a flare up. These causes vary from person to person. Some causes are stress, weather changes, medicines, cuts and bruises, infection, alcohol, and smoking.

Types of Psoriasis: While plaque psoriasis is the most common, here are some other types:

- Nail – changes appearance of finger- and toe-nails, affects 70-80% of patients
- Erythrodermic – large zones of deep red
- Guttate – small pink-red spots
- Inverse or Flexural– skin redness and irritation in the armpits, groin, and in skin folds; bothered by rubbing, prone to fungal infections
- Pustular– white blisters with red irritated skin around them
- Psoriatic – affects joints in the fingers and causes fingers to look like sausages; can also affect hips, knees, the spine, and the jaw

Treatment: While there is no cure for psoriasis, some things can help to control the symptoms and put off infections.

- Topical treatments – Many lotions, ointments, moisture creams, and shampoos can help to decrease the appearance and the itching
- Drugs – Some drugs available in pill or shot forms can help the body fight the disease
- Light therapy – Special lamps giving ultraviolet light can be shone on the patches.



Action Plan: Patients and caregivers should keep in mind these points:

- Keep the skin clean with daily baths, but avoid scrubbing too hard so that you do not irritate the skin.
- Never scratch or remove scales.
- Keep the skin moist all over.
- Avoid going in the sun as much as you can.
- Limit alcohol.
- Stop smoking.
- Eat a healthy and balanced food plan.
- Keep your weight under control
- Go to the dentist regularly.
- Tell your doctor if you notice hardening in your fingers, pain in your joints, or swelling in

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Psoriasis

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your knees, elbows, fingers, hands or feet. This could be a sign that psoriatic arthritis is starting.

- Relaxation and anti-stress techniques may be helpful. The link between stress and flares of psoriasis is not well understood.
- Some people may benefit from a psoriasis support group to help with patience, persistence and faith because treatments can take months to control the condition.

The [National Psoriasis Foundation \(NPF\)](#) has many resources online at their website. One of these resources is a list of apps that can be helpful in many ways to the person who is trying to understand their disease and track what may be causing flare-ups. One more site by NPF is “Citizen Psicist” (note: the P is needed) where patients can connect with other patients and with researchers in order to help learn more about how to control their disease and possibly lead to cures. WebMD is a very large website, and psoriasis is found under [Skin Problems](#). They outline an Action Plan that gives many suggestions for controlling psoriasis.

About the Authors:

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What’s in a Name?

You may have heard that the National Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel (NPUAP) just changed the name “pressure ulcer” to “pressure injury.” The AAWC feels that this name change may make people feel at fault for the growth of pressure ulcers that could not be prevented, and is working to help people grasp the change. The AAWC would like you to know that we want to be able to care for you and those you love in the best way.

While it may be “just a name change”, the new name can cause people to get the wrong sense about what is really going on when you have a pressure ulcer (PU). Here are some facts about how a PU happens.

Pressure ulcers always start deep under the skin. They do not happen from the outside of your body. They happen when tissue deep under the skin does not get good blood flow because the person is lying or sitting in the same position for some time. In people who are very sick, a PU can start in under an hour!

Using the name “injury” might make one think that something happened on the outside of the body to make a wound. The fact is that a PU can happen without an injury or something happening on the outside of your body. We often can’t tell that there is a problem deep under the skin right away; it takes some time to show on your skin.

When a person has high blood sugar, COPD, heart failure, poor eating habits, or some other health problems that are tough on the whole body, pressure ulcers happen more easily and more quickly. Still, they are not an “injury”: they do not just happen from the outside in. Having other long-term health issues makes a person more at risk for a PU, because their tissue under the skin already needs more oxygen and nutrients!

We don’t want you to feel scared or unsure if you are told that you have a “pressure injury”. Science has proven that pressure ulcers sometimes do happen no matter what we do to try to stop them. Pressure ulcers do not happen because someone wanted them to or because a person made them happen. While many things can be done to try to stop a PU from starting even in very sick people, they don’t happen by mishap or because someone caused them.

Whether called a pressure injury or a pressure ulcer, please know that the AAWC will support taking great care of you or your loved one!

Author: Karen Bauer NP-C, CWS, CHRN

The AAWC Board has created a position statement about the name change that can be found on the [Home Page of the AAWC Website](#).

Beyond the Lungs:

How Smoking Disturbs Wound Healing

Each year, on the third Thursday in November, the [American Cancer Society](#) challenges people to stop smoking for 24 hours in the Great American Smokeout event. In a perfect world, 24 hours seems easy enough and people will try to go for 48 hours or even weeks and months without smoking. In fact, some people taking part in the Great American Smokeout will stop smoking forever.

As a smoker, you hear a lot about how bad smoking is for your heart and your lungs, because it causes heart and lung disease. Many people do not think these diseases can happen to them, even if they smoke. Both health problems will have a big impact on your quality of life. Many smokers know that smoking can age the skin and cause permanent spots and wrinkles. More importantly, did you know that if you have a wound, there are many ways that smoking stops it from healing?

Nicotine and Blood

People become hooked on the nicotine that is in the tobacco in cigarettes, cigars, and pipes. Nicotine causes your arteries to spasm and become narrow. When an artery that sends blood to your skin is narrow, it is not able to bring blood and nutrients to a wound. Without blood and nutrients, your wound will not get the things it needs to heal.

Smoking and Immune Function

A healthy immune system is needed to help your body fight illness and infection, especially when you have a wound. Smoking is very good at harming your system. As a result of smoking, the cells and antibodies that protect your body and wound against bad bacteria become weak which makes it easier for your wound to become infected. An infected wound is hard to heal and may last many months or years.

Medicines used to get rid of the infection will not make it to your wound if your blood flow is not good.

Smoking and Nutrients

Vitamin C is a vital vitamin for healthy skin and blood flow. In smokers, Vitamin C levels are lower because the body uses Vitamin C to fight the harm that smoking causes. When you smoke, you will not have the needed amount of Vitamin C to support blood flow and skin health. Studies have shown that even smokers who take high doses of Vitamin C in pills or shots still have low levels of the vitamin in their bodies.

What if you stop smoking?

Did you know that if you stop smoking, your body will start to recover from the harmful effects within about *20 minutes*? Think about the effects if you stop smoking for just 24 hours?! Each positive benefit will help your wound to heal.



www.cancer.org

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Beyond the Lungs

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- 20 minutes without smoking
 - Heart rate and blood pressure drops
 - Temperature of your hands and feet increase
 - **Benefit: improved blood flow to bring nutrients to wounds on hands and feet**
- 8 hours without smoking
 - Oxygen level in blood becomes normal
 - **Benefit: Cells need oxygen to grow and help to heal your wound. As oxygen levels return to normal, your wound will improve.**
- 24 hours without smoking
 - Nerve endings start to recover
 - **Benefit: you will be better able to sense pressure and temperature on the skin of your foot, preventing injury to the skin in the first place.**
- 2 weeks to 3 months without smoking
 - Blood flow improves and walking becomes easier
 - **Benefit: better blood flow means that more blood, oxygen, drugs, and nutrients will make it to your wound to help it heal. Walking, when it becomes easier, is a great form of exercise to lower blood sugar and body weight. High blood sugar and high body weight make it harder for wounds to heal.**



Stop Smoking Resources

Ask your health worker about programs that will help you to stop smoking. You do not have to do it alone; people with support are more likely to quit for good. You can also get more information at:

- US Department of Health: Surgeon General "Quit Now" 1-800-784-8669
- US Department of Health & Human Services: www.smokefree.gov
- American Lung Association Helpline: 1-800-LUNGUSA

References

1. Gariballa S, Forster S. Effects of smoking on nutrition status and response to dietary supplements during acute illness. *Nutr Clin Pract.* 2009 Feb Mar;24(1):84-90.
2. Lane CA, Selleck C, Chen Y, Tang Y. The Impact of Smoking and Smoking Cessation on Wound Healing in Spinal Cord-Injured Patients With Pressure Injuries: A Retrospective Comparison Cohort Study. *J Wound Ostomy Continence Nurs.* 2016 Sep-Oct;43(5):483-7.

About the Author: Maria L. Urso, PhD - AAWC Blog Author and WIN Taskforce Member

Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving Day by Lydia Maria Child

Over the river, and through the wood,
To grandfather's house we go;
The horse knows the way
To carry the sleigh
Through the white and drifted snow.

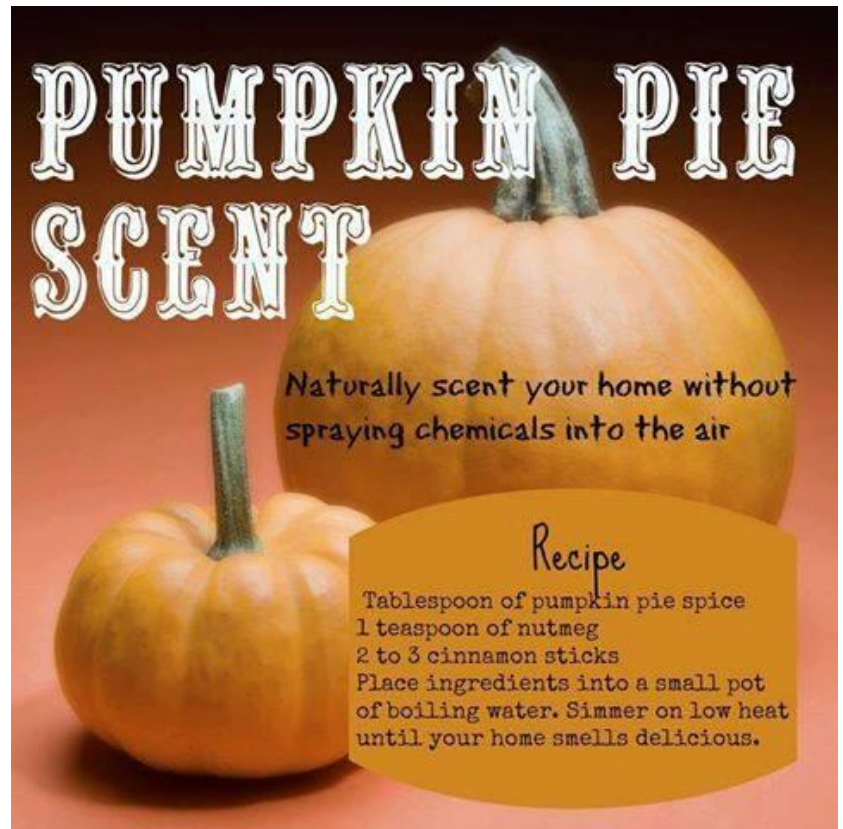
Over the river, and through the wood –
Oh, how the wind does blow!
It stings the toes
And bites the nose
As over the ground we go.

Over the river, and through the wood,
To have a first-rate play.
Hear the bells ring
"Ting-a-ling-ding",
Hurrah for Thanksgiving Day!

Over the river, and through the wood
Trot fast, my dapple-gray!
Spring over the ground,
Like a hunting-hound!
For this is Thanksgiving Day.

Over the river, and through the wood,
And straight through the barn-yard gate.
We seem to go
Extremely slow, –
It is so hard to wait!

Over the river and through the wood –
Now grandmother's cap I spy!
Hurrah for the fun!
Is the pudding done?
Hurrah for the pumpkin-pie!



Happy Thanksgiving From AAWC

