

WIN

WOUNDS IN NEED

Helping Patients and Caregivers Succeed!



AAWC WIN Membership Perks

Did you get an email with the AAWC WIN Winter 2017 Newsletter? If not, and if you have a new email, please let Karen Strauss know at kstrauss@aawconline.org.

One more perk of being a part of AAWC is the yearly Wound Clinic Directory. The 2017 list has also been sent to your email.

This year there are over 1000 listings, with 51 clinics found in countries outside of the US.

To make sure you get email about AAWC, you may need to add info@aawconline.org, Patient_Advocacy@aawconline.org, and kstrauss@aawconline.org to your safe senders list.

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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 Military Awareness Month

We all appreciate what military personnel and the Veterans do for our country so let's take time to recognize these dedicated citizens during May.

Here are a few ways you can support the Military and Veterans:

***Display the American flag on your home or business!**

***Engage media to highlight military and veterans events**

***Encourage schools to include military history curriculum**

***When you see a person in military uniform, shake their hand and thank them for their service**

***Send a note to a soldier through USO at <https://www.uso.org/messages>.**

More ideas can be found at <http://www.nmam.org/>.

AAWC Thanks our Military and Veteran Members!



In honor of our military members and supporters, this month's question will be one that we will ask you: did you know that many of the things that we do in wound care came from learning how to treat our wounded military?

War is scary, with very few happy endings, but improvement in medical care is one. We owe even more thanks to our brave military, because from wartimes have come some of our most helpful health advances. It was during World War I that we learned how to collect and use blood for transfusions and during World War II that one of our most used antibiotics was made.



Now, soldiers from ongoing wars are able to live and heal much more than in the past because we have learned to take better care of our wounded soldiers. The military has done a great job in finding new and creative ways to treat our beloved soldiers!

Ask the Nurse

Sadly, war can create complex, deep wounds, burns, and blunt trauma injuries that might become infected without proper care.



Traumatic Toe Amputation

This is why the military looks into new and creative ways of treating wounds and keeping them from getting infected. The military is very far along in what we call regenerative medicine, which is where experts can make living organs, such as skin!

Many dressings and tools have been made to help wounded soldiers. One product was made to help stop bleeding very quickly and is being used in other places to help all people now. Yet one more reason to thank a brave soldier today!

There are many places where you can get support and help if you are a veteran. If you

have a computer at home; each of these groups has a website. If you don't have a computer at home, your local library can help!

Some good places to start are:

The Elizabeth Dole Foundation:
600 New Hampshire Ave, NW
STE 1020

Washington, DC 20037

<https://www.elizabethdolefoundation.org>

Luke's Wings

1054 31st Street NW

Suite 540

Washington, DC 20007

1-866-834-1682

<http://www.lukeswings.org>

Military One Click

<http://militaryoneclick.com>

The Yellow Ribbon Fund

4905 Del Rey Ave.

Suite 500

Bethesda, MD 20814

240-223-1180

email@theyellowribbonfund.com

<http://www.yellowribbonfund.org>

SemperFi Fund

760-725-3680

<https://semperfifund.org>

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

A “Whole”-istic Guide to Summer Skin Care

The lazy days of summer are almost here! It is tough not to think back to when we were carefree kids, when summer meant vacation, swimming, ice-cream, and running around barefoot. As adults, we should continue to enjoy being outside and active. However, summer brings some new challenges when it comes to caring for your skin. Below are five tips to help you to keep your skin healthy while enjoying the best that summer has to offer:

1) Drink up

Your skin is the largest organ of the body. It helps you to stay cool by sweating, but you lose a lot of water in the process. Drinking plenty of water will keep your skin healthy and your body comfortable. If you have a wound, it is even more vital that you drink enough water since moist wounds heal faster.

If you have an ostomy, drinking is especially important because of the extra fluids lost via your ostomy.



You should try to drink ½ ounce of water for each pound that you weigh. If you weigh 150 pounds, you should have 75 ounces of water throughout the day. To help you reach your goal, bring a water bottle with you wherever you go, especially to parties (this will prevent you from drinking the high-sugar options in the cooler). You should also keep water by your bed at night and drink a glass as soon as you wake up. Water-rich foods can certainly help with your intake, while slowing down fluid output. Enjoy big salads! Summer is the perfect time for fresh vegetables.

2) Don't fight food

Summer can be a difficult time to watch your diet with cook-outs every weekend and ice cream stands on every corner. It is important not to take a summer vacation from monitoring your blood sugar. Never show up to a party hungry, and bring a healthy snack that you enjoy to share with guests. If you do choose to have a treat at a party, make sure that you take a single portion, and allow yourself to enjoy the food. Do not spend the whole time that you are eating thinking of how ‘bad’ you are. Food should be nutritious, not ‘good’ or ‘bad’.

If you tell yourself that the food is ‘bad’ while you are eating, you will not experience the pleasure from the food. As a result, you will only want more. Remember portion control and making sure that you eat healthy before and after the event. If you choose to go for ice cream, try and walk there or park on the far side of the parking lot and get a little extra exercise.



3) Watch your wound

If you have a wound in the summer, there are two things you need to remember. The first is to keep it away from open water (lakes, ponds, pools, ocean, etc.). The second is that the sun may cause your skin to scar if you do not protect your wound with a bandage or sunscreen. Although you clean your wound with water at home, that water is clean. Open water has everything in it from bacteria to bugs, and can cause an infection. Also, the chlorine in pools can harm the new cells that are repairing your wound.

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Guide to Summer Skin

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While you can go to the beach or the pool with an open wound, just be sure that it is properly dressed (cleaning sand and dirt out of your wound is no fun), and keep it dry. If you have a wound that has recently healed, apply sunscreen for at least one year after healing to reduce scarring. If the wound is not yet closed, keep a bandage over it to shield it from the sun.

4) Get in gear

Your doctor has probably told you not to walk around barefoot and to wear proper footwear in order to protect your feet. Sandals and flip flops are comfortable in the summer, but they expose your feet and increase the risk of getting a new wound. Good shoes to wear in the summer are espadrilles or surf shoes. Both should be snug-fitting while allowing for healthy circulation. If you can, wear socks to further prevent rubbing. Keep an extra pair of socks on hand in case the first pair gets wet.

5) Protect from pests

Bugs and warm weather go hand in hand and so do bug bites! It is important that you do what you can to avoid bug bites. Apply a spray or lotion

that will keep bugs from feasting on your skin, and light citronella candles when spending time outdoors. Keep your arms, legs, and feet covered when you are outdoors at sunset (when bugs are worse) or hiking. The reason why it is so important to do what you can to prevent bug bites is because they can easily turn into an ulcer if the skin breaks when you scratch them. If you do get a bug bite, keep it covered and apply a topical anti-itch cream (like calamine lotion) so that you are less likely to scratch. Also be careful of pesky plants such as poison oak, ivy, and sumac.



If you think that you have come into contact with these plants, shower immediately with soap. Pets can also bring the oils from these plants indoors, so be sure to bathe your pet to remove the

plant oils from their fur. If a rash does develop, seek medical advice immediately.

Summer can be just as fun as when you were a child, and a great time to do more to stay active and healthy. Make the most of your summer and these five tips will help to keep your skin healthy all year long.

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

Preventing and Caring for Wounds Due to Cancer

When we talk about wounds due to cancer there are two important separate issues that are linked together: the cancer and the wound. The cancer is treated by specialists in cancer who often consult with wound specialists. The study and treatment of cancer is called oncology. As stated by the World Health Organization (WHO), cancer is the uncontrolled growth and spread of cells. These growths are called tumors. Besides skin cancer, many cancers can cause tumors on the skin, including cancers of the head, neck, breast, and testicles.

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Wounds Due to Cancer

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Tumors on the skin are called malignant because they are very aggressive and they can grow and change very quickly. These wounds are hard to treat because they don't have an open bed like other wounds do, they don't bleed, they have a bad, smelly odor and they don't respond to treatment like other wounds. Cancerous tumors often don't cause pain because they damage nerve endings.

Oncology wound eight months after mastectomy.



Source: Hospital Practice Site, 2006.

Cancerous tumors are special and have to be treated by wound care professionals who have experience with these types of wounds. If left untreated, cancer wounds can cause death due to infection.

The European Wound Management Association (EWMA) says Treatment and care of oncology wounds include:

- Treat the tumor: surgery, radiotherapy, chemotherapy, neutron therapy, laser

treatments, electro-chemotherapy, topical chemotherapy, chemo static drugs, targeted therapy;

- Documentation: goal setting with the patient and family;
- Nutritional support: healthy food plan;
- Psychosocial support: patient, family, friends, church;
- Dressings and topical preparations;
- Lymphedema treatment: range of massage techniques, self-massage techniques, compression hosiery and bandaging;
- Symptom control – pain, odor, fluid from the wound;
- Homeopathy if applicable.

When treatments aimed at healing the wound and killing the cancer no longer work, the caring process can change to palliative care. Palliative care is aimed at improving the quality of life of patients and their families by preventing or decreasing pain and increasing comfort. It may also include early identification, good evaluation, medication if needed, and dressings that will eliminate odor and are easy for the family, caregivers, or patient to use.

The European Code against Cancer focuses on 12

individual actions we can take to try to prevent cancer:

1. Avoid tobacco;
2. Avoid second-hand smoke;
3. Maintain a healthy body weight;
4. Stay active;
5. Eat a healthy diet;
6. Minimize alcohol;
7. Avoid too much sun and ultraviolet rays;
8. Avoid pollutants;
9. Address high radon levels in your home;
10. Limit use of hormone drugs;
11. Vaccinate against HPV and hepatitis B;
12. Take part in cancer screenings.

Do everything you can to try to prevent cancer and the wounds that the cancer can cause. If you do get a wound from cancer, find a wound care professional that has treated these difficult wounds in the past. Not all wounds can be cured, but they can definitely be treated so that your life can be as full and satisfying as possible.

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Pressure Ulcers – Is It You or Is It Me?

People who go to surgery and are sick enough to have to stay in Intensive Care Units (ICU's) have a high chance of getting a pressure ulcer (PU). These wounds happen even in hospitals that give excellent nursing care. A PU that happens while the patient is in the hospital is called a Hospital Acquired Pressure Ulcer or HAPU. Many HAPU's are very deep and ugly.



Caregivers in hospitals work hard to prevent HAPU's by providing all that they can such as special mattresses to even out pressure, special fabrics to stop pulling or damaging the skin, keeping patients clean and dry, and providing activity, movement and nutrition as the patient can handle. Even with all of this, HAPU's happen anyway. Maybe there are factors about a person's body that make some people more likely to get a HAPU.

People have thought that some of the reasons for a HAPU may include the patient's

weight, age, sex, blood pressure (BP), numbers of different kinds of cells in their blood such as red blood cells (this is called hematocrit or HCT), need for dialysis, how long they stay in surgery or in ICU, type of surgery, use of medicines called vasopressors to increase BP and many others. If we knew which were more vital, then patients with those features could be treated with the most appropriate care to prevent PUs.

Study: An article was published that studied people who got HAPU's while they were in surgery or in the ICU. The authors used records from 119 patients, 72 who did not get a PU, and 47 who did. They noted 25 features of each of these patients, and then compared the features of the two groups. Did some of the features happen more often in the group that got HAPU's?

Results: The features seen more often in the group that got HAPUs were lower BP, longer time in surgery, blood that was slow to clot (high INR often due to blood thinning drugs), and had a history of dialysis, shock (a sudden decrease in BP due to a health problem, often seen in surgery and ICU), or need for meds to raise BP (vasopressors).

Conclusion: Even if you are in an excellent hospital and your caregivers do all they can for you, you may still get a HAPU if you have surgery or have to go to ICU. Decrease your chances by keeping as healthy as possible, especially in the weeks just before surgery. Get your BP under control. Ask the doctor to make your time on the surgery table as short as possible. Ask if they can put you on a special pad on the table to protect your body. Let the doctors and nurses know if you have been on dialysis, take blood thinning or blood pressure medicine, or have ever been told you "went into shock" anytime in your life.

There are many reasons why a PU happens, and we don't really know which reasons may be more vital than others. But we have to do all we know we can to stop them.

Kirkland-Kynn et al. A retrospective, descriptive, comparative study to identify patient variables that contribute to the development of deep tissue injury among patients in intensive care units. *OWM*. 2017; 63(2):42-47.

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