

**HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE SUPPORT SERVICES**  
North East  
**HELPING YOU HEAL**

## Your Guide to Wound Care



## Diabetic Foot Ulcers

310-2222 or 1-888-533-2222

Ontario 

# THE PROGRAM

This booklet will help you:

- Manage your wound at home
- Improve and maintain your health and quality of life,
- Prevent new wounds.

You can use this booklet and the accompanying passport to:

- Keep track of information about your care
- Guide your day-to-day wound care
- Know when you need to call your Home and Community Care Support Services North East care team
- Ensure that your wound is being managed in the best way possible

**Your team looks forward to working with YOU to Heal/Take Control of Your Wound.**



You have developed some personal goals, and your passport is your tool to keeping track of them, and of your care, as you begin managing your wound at home.

To heal your wound you will need to take care of yourself and pay attention to your body, but it does not mean you need to stop doing the things you love to do, and this booklet is here to help!

Keep this booklet and your passport nearby, in a convenient spot, so you can refer to them and make notes about your healing journey. It helps to know a bit more about your particular wound.



## DIABETIC FOOT ULCERS

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You have a diabetic foot ulcer, a type of wound caused in people with diabetes for a number of reasons.

The loss of sensation in your feet caused by diabetes can result in unnoticed pressure or injury. Incorrect footwear can increase the pressure on your feet, which you cannot feel. Normal injuries like nicks, cuts, bruises or blisters may go unnoticed and progress into ulcers. Then, the lack of blood flow caused by the diabetes decreases the body's ability to heal. Smoking increases this risk as it diminishes blood flow to the extremities.

Diabetic foot ulcers are often painless, but may take weeks or even several months to heal, and are the most common reason for hospital stays for people with diabetes. Left untreated, they are a common cause for surgical amputations.

# MANAGING YOUR DIABETIC FOOT ULCER

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Knowing what caused your arterial ulcer and your risk factors will help you manage your wound and prevent future arterial ulcers from forming. In order to be YOUR healthiest, you should:

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1. **Monitor and control your sugars.** Your nurse can help you learn to do this.
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2. **Wear properly fitting shoes and socks.** Your nurse may refer you to a chiropodist for special footwear. This will ensure your feet are not under pressure.
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3. **Try not to go barefoot.** Since diabetics often can't feel their feet, going barefoot is dangerous. Always wear your shoes or slippers.
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4. **Eat a balanced diet**, high in protein, which keeps your skin strong and helps wounds heal. Our team may recommend a special diet.
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5. **If you smoke, QUIT!** It's bad for blood flow, your skin, and your body. Your team will talk to you about options that will help you kick the habit! It's truly one of the best things you can do for your body at any age.
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# CARING FOR YOUR WOUND

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Here are the steps you'll need to take to properly care for your wound:

## **PREPARE**

- Get your supplies together and clean a work surface with plenty of room

## **WASH HANDS**

- Remove all jewelry and point hands down, under warm water
- Add soap and wash for 15 to 30 seconds, cleaning under your nails
- Rinse and dry well with a clean towel

## **REMOVING DRESSING**

- Carefully loosen the dressing, and pull off gently
- If the dressing sticks, wet the area
- Put old dressing in a plastic bag, and set aside
- Wash your hands AGAIN

## **INSPECT**

- Inspect wound for any drainage, redness, pain or swelling

## **CLEAN WOUND**

- Fill syringe with recommended fluid
- Hold 1 to 6 inches away from the wound and spray gently
- Use soft, dry cloth or piece of gauze to pat the wound dry

## **APPLY DRESSING**

- Place and secure the clean dressing onto your wound

## **FINISH**

- Throw used supplies into waterproof, tightly closed, double plastic bag
- Wash your hands AGAIN
- Wash any soiled laundry separately

**REMEMBER, USE A DRESSING ONLY ONCE,  
AND NEVER REUSE.**

# SIGNS OF TROUBLE

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Your wound will change throughout the healing process. Changing your dressing gives you a chance to take a closer look at your wound.

Call your nurse if you see the following changes:

- More redness, pain, swelling, or bleeding
- The wound is larger or deeper
- The wound looks dried out or dark
- The drainage coming from the wound is increasing
- The drainage coming from the wound becomes thick, tan, green or yellow, or smells bad (pus)
- Your temperature is above 100 °F (37.8 °C) for more than 2 hours

# MY DRESSING CHANGE

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Keep the following list handy and use it to help you remember the types of dressings you will use for your wound and when to change your dressings.

**I REMOVE MY  
DRESSING:**

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**I CLEAN MY WOUND:**

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**THE 1ST DRESSING I  
APPLY:**

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**THE 2ND DRESSING I  
APPLY:**

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**THE 3RD DRESSING I  
APPLY:**

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**I CHANGE MY  
DRESSINGS:**

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**I WILL CALL MY NURSE:**

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**IF MY DRESSING LEAKS:**

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## MANAGING YOUR WOUND

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Here are a few scenarios that will help you to judge how your healing is progressing:

### **Your wound is healthy.**

Your wound looks very similar to the last dressing change. There is no redness, inflammation, pain, bleeding and the discharge looks the same. Your wound may look smaller and the discharge may be less.

### **Your wound may be in trouble, call your nurse.**

Your wound looks larger or deeper. There is some redness and it looks swollen. There is no bleeding but the discharge is different, or there is more than usual.

### **Call your nurse or follow up with your primary care provider. If there is an emergency, call 911.**

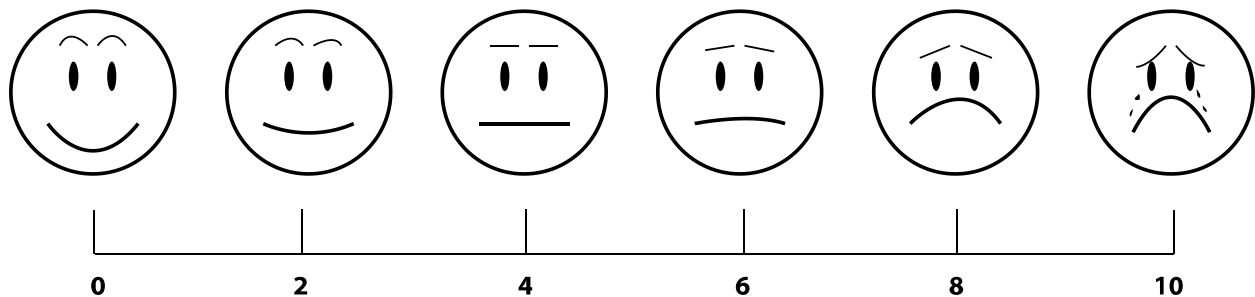
Your wound looks much larger or deeper. There is redness, swelling and bleeding that isn't stopping. The discharge is very different or there is much more of it. You have pain and a fever.

# DAILY ACTIVITIES

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Please note the following daily activities

- Check your dressing daily. Ensure your dressing is dry and stable. Check to see if a dressing change is required.
- Inspect your skin and body.
- Assess your wound for any changes daily or with each dressing change
- Eat three meals a day based on Canada's Food Guide.
- Assess how you generally feel today.
- Assess your pain level. The scale below may help you to assess your pain level. You may review this with your nurse at appointments.
- Follow your exercise plan.



# RED FLAGS

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**IF YOU EXPERIENCE ANY OF THESE, CALL 911 OR GO TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM IMMEDIATELY!**

- Your temperature is above 100 °F (37.8 °C) for more than 4 hours
- You have difficulty breathing
- You feel confused
- You have fever, chills, or light-headedness
- Your wound is bleeding and does NOT stop



## CONTACT INFORMATION

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Use this worksheet to record important numbers and information while you manage your wound at home

My Nurse's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Office Number: \_\_\_\_\_

My Care Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Office Number: \_\_\_\_\_

My Physician: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Office Number: \_\_\_\_\_

# CONTACT US

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Call us toll-free at 310-2222 (no area code required) or  
1-888-533-2222.

[healthcareathome.ca/northeast](http://healthcareathome.ca/northeast)

Home and Community Care Support Services North  
East has many community offices to serve you,  
including:

## **KIRKLAND LAKE**

53 Government Road West  
Kirkland Lake ON P2N 2E5  
Telephone: 705-567-2222  
Toll free: 1-888-602-2222

## **SAULT STE. MARIE**

390 Bay Street, Suite 103  
Sault Ste. Marie ON P6A 1X2  
Telephone: 705-949-1650  
Toll free: 1-800-668-7705

## **NORTH BAY**

1164 Devonshire Ave.  
North Bay ON P1B 6X7  
Telephone: 705-476-2222  
Toll free: 1-888-533-2222

## **SUDBURY**

40 Elm St, Suite 41-C  
Sudbury ON P3C 1S8  
Telephone: 705-522-3461  
Toll free: 1-800-461-2919  
TTY: 711 (ask operator for  
1-888-533-2222)

## **PARRY SOUND**

6 Albert Street  
Parry Sound ON P2A 3A4  
Toll free: 1-800-440-6762

## **TIMMINS**

330 Second Avenue,  
Suite 101  
Timmins ON P4N 8A4  
Telephone: 705-267-7766  
Toll free: 1-888-668-2222