



**Te Kaporeihana Āwhina  
Hunga Whara**  
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# Wound Awareness Week 24 - 30 August 2020

## Presenting: Skin Tears

# Presented by

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As a Wound Care Nurse Specialist in the acute, subacute and community sectors at Counties Manukau DHB and Auckland DHB, Liz's passion for providing excellence in wound care management was focused on improving standards of holistic patient evidence-based care and ensuring that the care provided met the client's needs and promoted positive outcomes.

# Content

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Section 1: Definition, prevalence, causes, risk factors

**Section 2: Prevention**

Section 3: Assessment and management



# Section 2 - Skin Tear Prevention

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- Skin care regime
- Preventative tips
- Nutrition and hydration
- Pharmacologic agents

# Skin Tear Prevention is the Principle Goal

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## It is important to:

1. Identify those at risk
2. Implement the appropriate preventative strategies



# Skin Care Regime

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- use a soap substitute for showering or bathing
- use soft cloths and towels, pat the skin dry, do not rub
- moisture arms and legs twice a day
- reduce frequency of bathing and ensure water temperature is not too hot
- use a standardised pH, perfume free moisturiser



Twice-daily skin moisturising has been proven to reduce the incidence of skin tears by 50% (Carville et al., 2014)

# Preventative Tips

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- create a safe environment
- correct manual handling techniques
- reduce/eliminate pressure, using pressure relieving devices and positioning techniques
- encourage the individual to wear protective footwear and clothing to reduce the risk of skin trauma
- keep nails short and remove jewellery that may contact the person
- arm and leg skin protectors



# Nutrition and Hydration

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Those at extreme weights either bariatric, cachexia or extremely thin will require extra care to minimise the risk of skin tears.

Quain and Khardoni, 2015

## It is important to:

- assess the individual's general wellbeing to optimise nutrition and hydration status
- use a nutritional screening tool e.g. Malnutrition Universal screening tool ( MUST)
- consider dietician referral



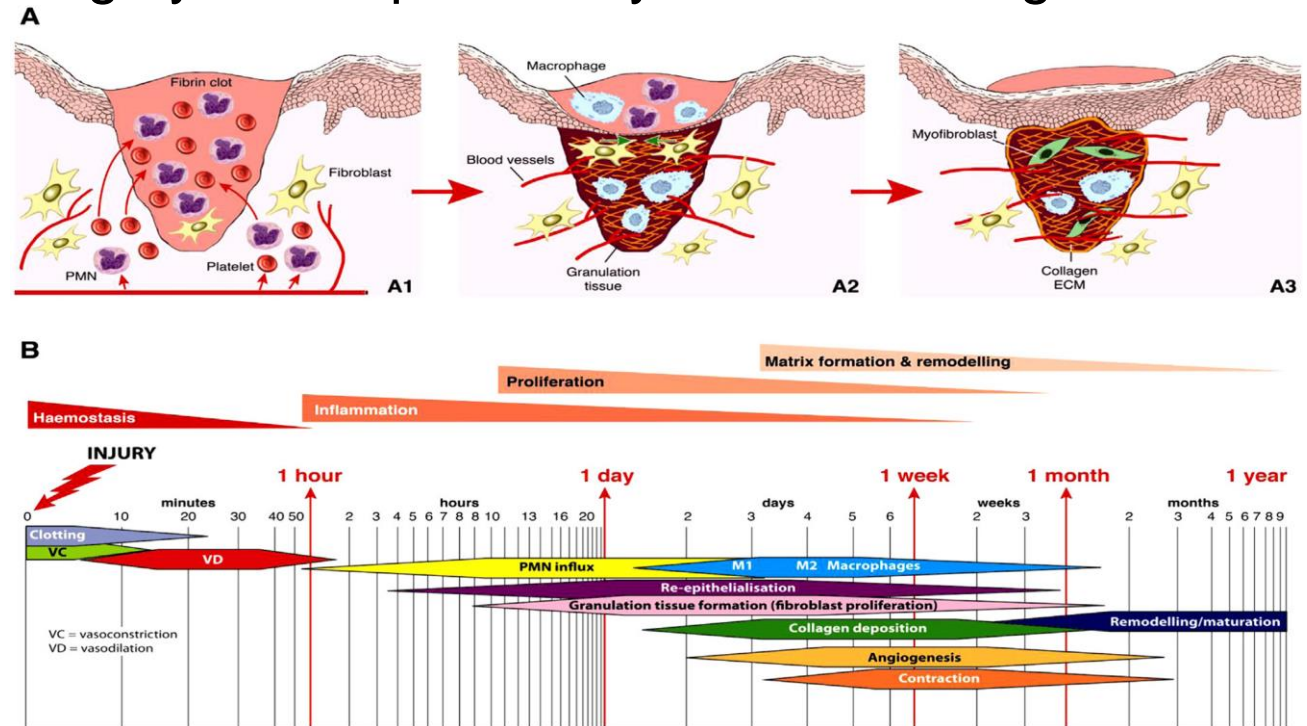


# Pharmacologic Agents

Many medications can weaken skin integrity and impact/delay wound healing.

These may include:

- anticoagulants
- Antimicrobials
- anti-angiogenesis agents
- antineoplastic drugs
- anti-rheumatoid drugs
- colchicine
- nicotine replacement therapy
- Steroids
- Vasoconstrictors
- Dakin solution (sodium hypochlorite or bleach)



Advanced Drug Delivery Reviews  
Volume 127, 1 March 2018, Pages 138-166

# Polypharmacy

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Common in the older person multiple medications can predispose to drug interactions and reactions, causing confusion and other negative health outcomes, such as falls.

It is important to:

- Review medications that can increase falls risk e.g. antihypertensives or sedative medications, or contribute to delayed wound healing such as corticosteroids.



# Summary

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- Raise awareness
- Consumer, family /whanau and healthcare worker education
- Develop a skin care guide (soap substitute, barrier and moisturiser) and skin tear dressing formulary
- Moisturise! Moisturise! Moisturise!
- Early referral for complex history and injuries



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