

Orthopaedic Connection

Treatment of Chronic Foot and Leg Wounds

By Thomas J. Haverbush, M.D.
Orthopaedic Surgeon

Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

The treatment and management of chronic (non or slow healing) wounds of the foot and lower leg and sometimes other areas also, has become its own specialty.

When you are young and healthy you don't give much thought to cuts, scrapes, abrasions, and deep bruises because they always heal. For the most part the problems are treated at home or maybe at an Urgent Care if it seems a little more serious.

Danger Lurks

Unfortunately, as we age most patients and sometimes Health Care Providers apply the same thinking to wound care as when we were younger. As you age your body does not possess the same ability to heal as it once did. It is not something you are thinking about very often and probably don't want to admit. Maybe you haven't even had a physical exam in years. So why may this ulcer or wound not heal?

I'm glad you asked me that question. Let me count the ways.

- Diabetes
- Neuropathy
- Decreased arterial circulation
- Varicose veins
- Infection
- Renal disease
- Many other medical conditions

First Pitfall

Failing to recognize that a potentially serious wound or ulcer is developing is the first pitfall. What worked in your youth in treating these wounds and ulcers won't work anymore.

Neither will the standard Walk In Clinic prescription of peroxide, antibiotic ointment and Keflex. The condition seems to remain the same for awhile, but then the cut or wound often gets real stinky and the surrounding skin becomes red and swollen. Oops. My first question is how long have you had this? Answers vary widely.

A New Day

Fortunately, Wound Care has become its own specialty in recent years. Unfortunately, patients and families are mostly unaware that wound care has developed in this way and even more sadly lots of physicians, PAs and nurses are not always aware of what is available.

I want to make you aware of the Wound Treatment Center program and building at Gratiot Medical Center in Alma.

The Wound Treatment Center building adjacent to the tower at Gratiot Medical Center opened in January 2012. Dr. R. Koterba, RSM, M.D., a general surgeon is the Medical Director.

As an extension of my continuing Orthopaedic Surgery practice I have also become affiliated with the Wound Treatment Center I am proud to say. There is much more I want to tell you about Wound Care, its connection to Orthopaedic Surgery and what we offer at the Wound Treatment Center. Please come back next week to learn what is now possible. Have a good week.

Gratiot County Herald Archive and Office Website.

I sincerely appreciate all of you loyal readers and patients present and future and welcome all newcomers!

Besides what you read today there is a huge treasure trove of Orthopaedic and musculoskeletal information at www.orthopodsurgeon.com. It contains the Website Library, Your Orthopaedic Connection and complete archive of every GCH article I have written.

I specialize in you. Be well.

Dr. Haverbush