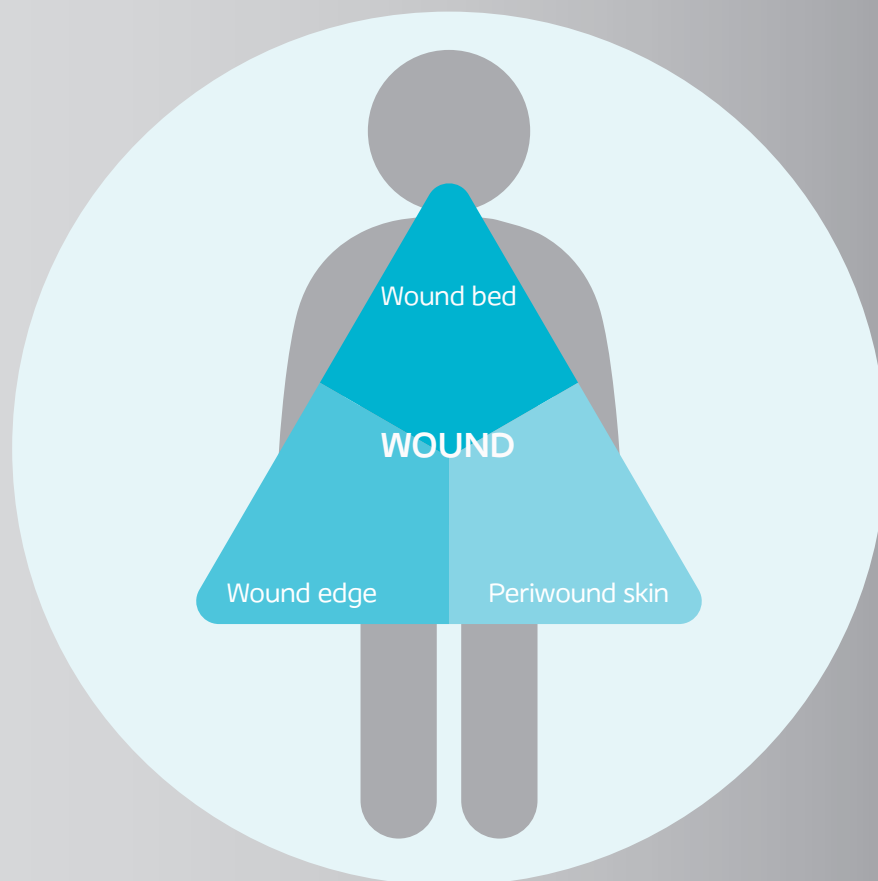


The Triangle of Wound Assessment

A simple and holistic framework for wound management





We asked healthcare professionals around the world about their priorities for wound care

We found that most people treating wounds are not specialists in a hospital¹



Up to **79%** of wounds are being treated in the community²

Respondents said that protecting the periwound skin is very important¹



Approximately **70%** of wounds are surrounded by unhealthy skin³

However, in a recent study of 14 wound assessment tools ...

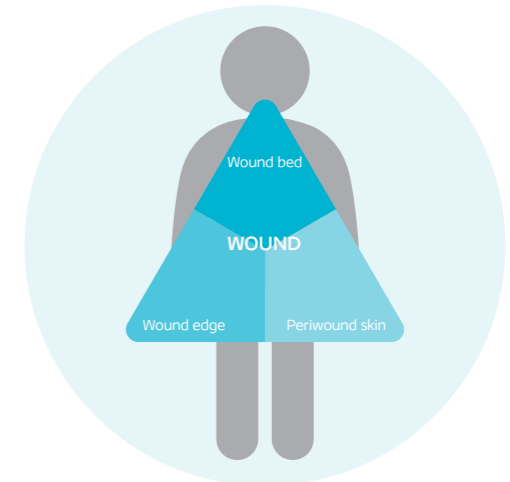


...none met all of the criteria for optimal wound assessment⁴



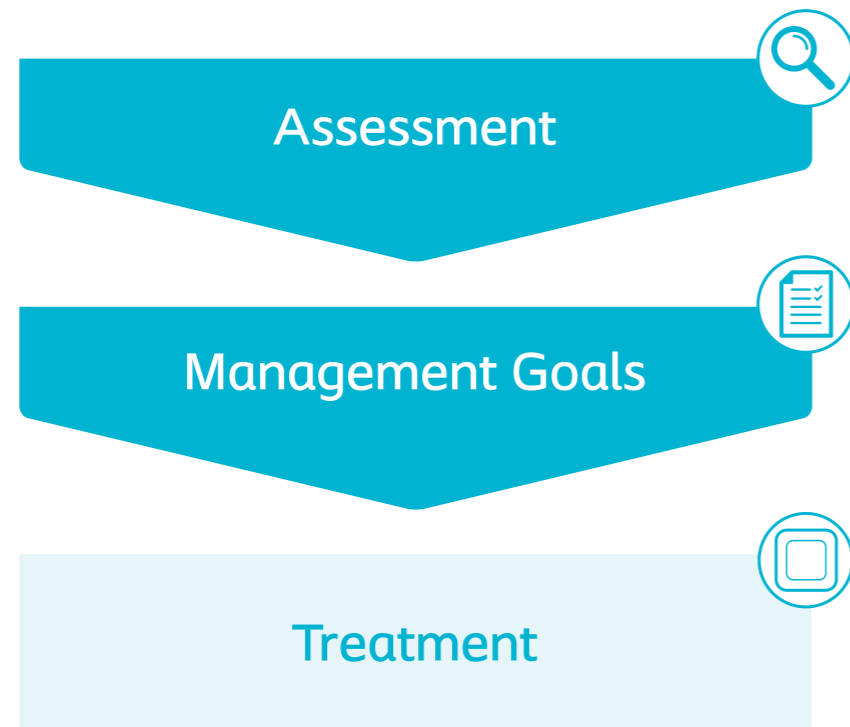
The Triangle of Wound Assessment is a holistic framework that allows practitioners to assess and manage all areas of the wound, including the periwound skin.

It is a simple and systematic approach that guides the Health Care Professional from complete wound assessment to setting management goals and selecting relevant treatment options.



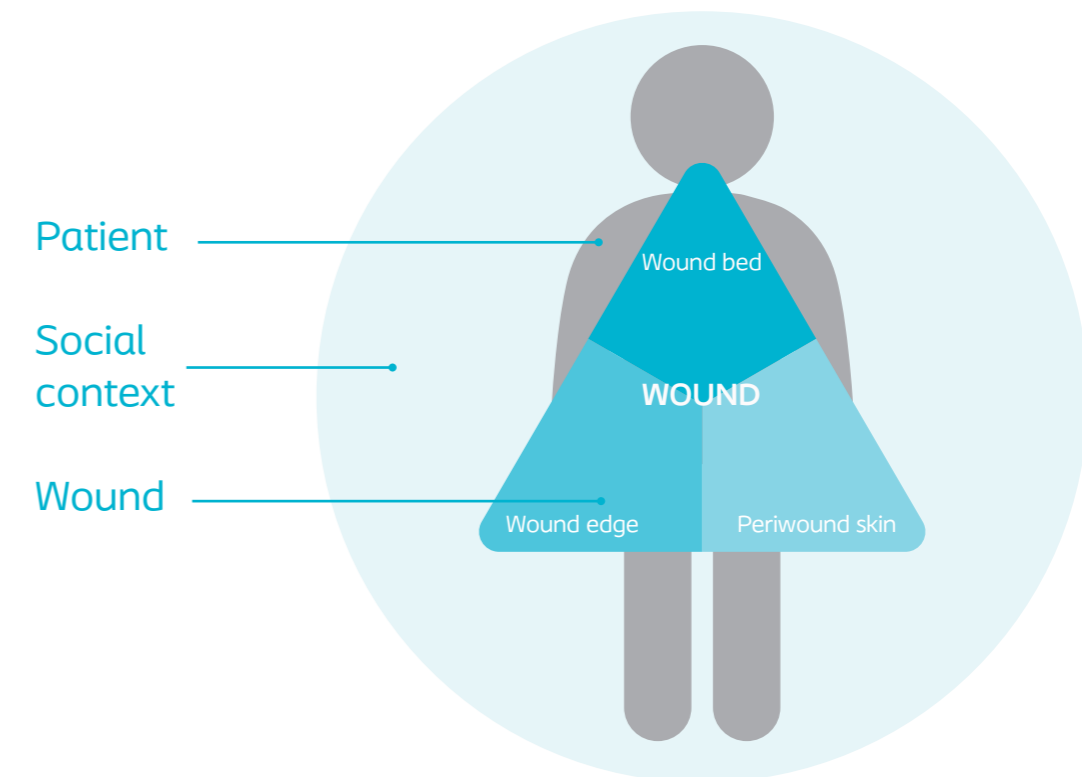
The Triangle of Wound Assessment offers a systematic approach to wound management

Optimal wound management starts with a holistic wound assessment.^{6,7,8} This will help to more efficiently set management goals, which will increase the potential for better treatment outcomes.



This is achieved through a holistic framework

The Triangle of Wound Assessment provides a framework to assess all three areas of the wound while remembering the patient behind the wound within their social context.



It's not just about the wound but also the patient behind the wound

Optimal management of the wound starts with assessing the patient behind the wound, and the social context in which the patient lives.^{6,7,8}



Patient & Social context

Information

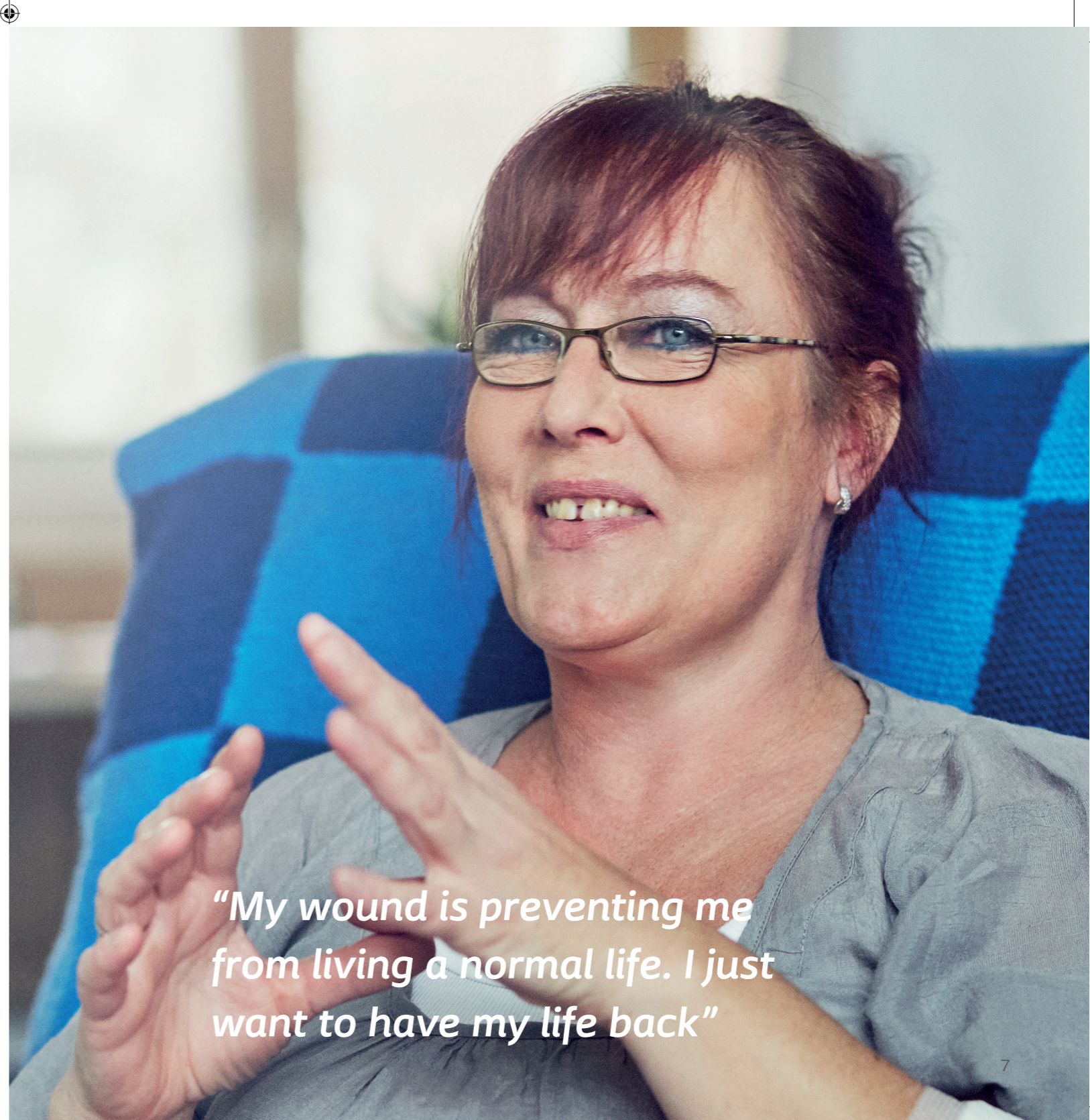
- Age
- Gender
- Nutrition & Mobility
- Smoking & Alcohol
- Work & living arrangements

Medical history

- Co-morbidities
- Medications

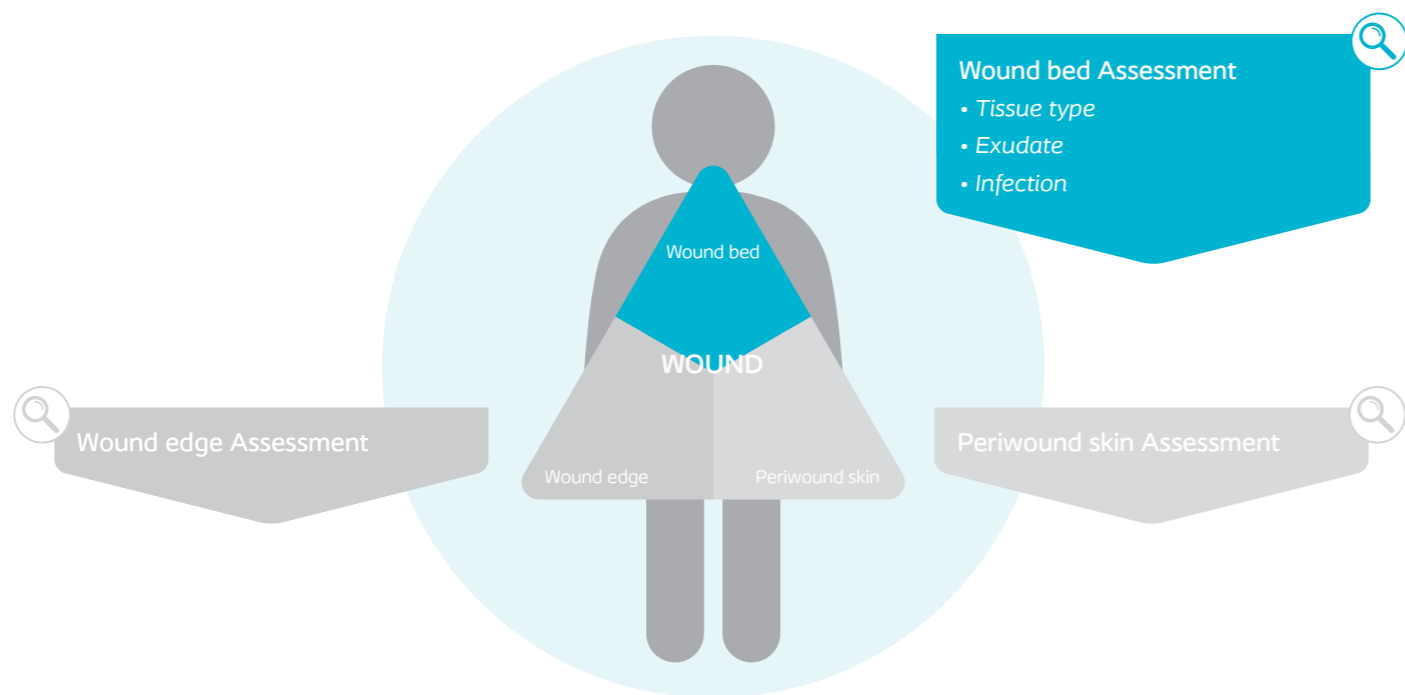
Wound description

- Type/diagnosis
- Location & Duration
- Size
- Pain



Wound bed assessment

The wound bed needs to be monitored closely due to its unpredictability. Problems often arising in this area can have an impact on both the wound edge and the periwound skin.^{6,7,8}



Wound bed Assessment

Tissue type

Necrotic — % Granulating — %

Sloughy — % Epithelialising — %

Exudate

Level Dry Low Medium High

Type Thin/watery Cloudy Thick

Purulent Clear Pink/red

Infection

Local

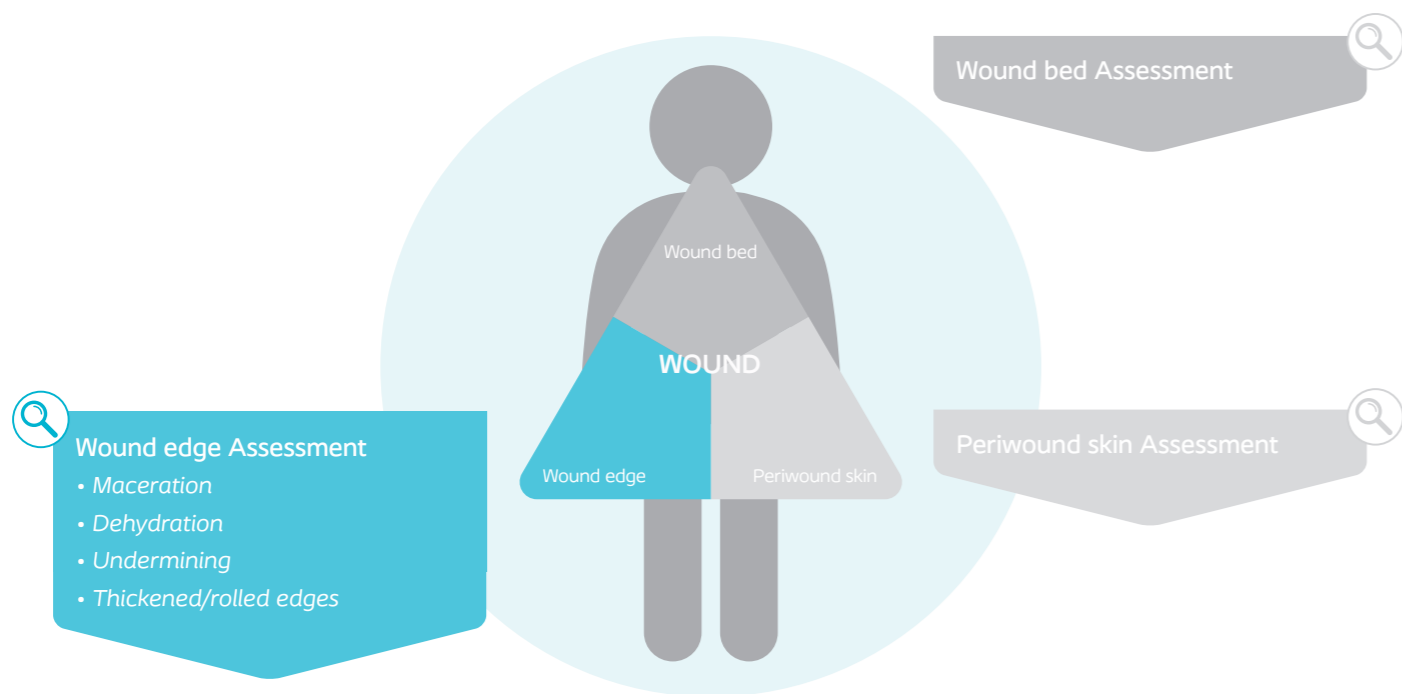
- Increased pain
- Erythema
- Oedema
- Local warmth
- Increased exudate
- Delayed healing
- Friable granulation tissue
- Malodour
- Pocketing

Spreading/systemic


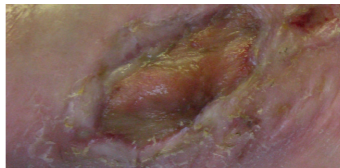


- Increased erythema
- Pyrexia
- Abscess/pus
- Wound breakdown
- Cellulitis
- General malaise
- Raised WBC count
- Lymphangitis

Wound edge assessment

Wound edge assessment provides valuable information of wound progression. Advancement of the epithelial edge is a reliable predictive indicator of wound healing.^{6,7,8}



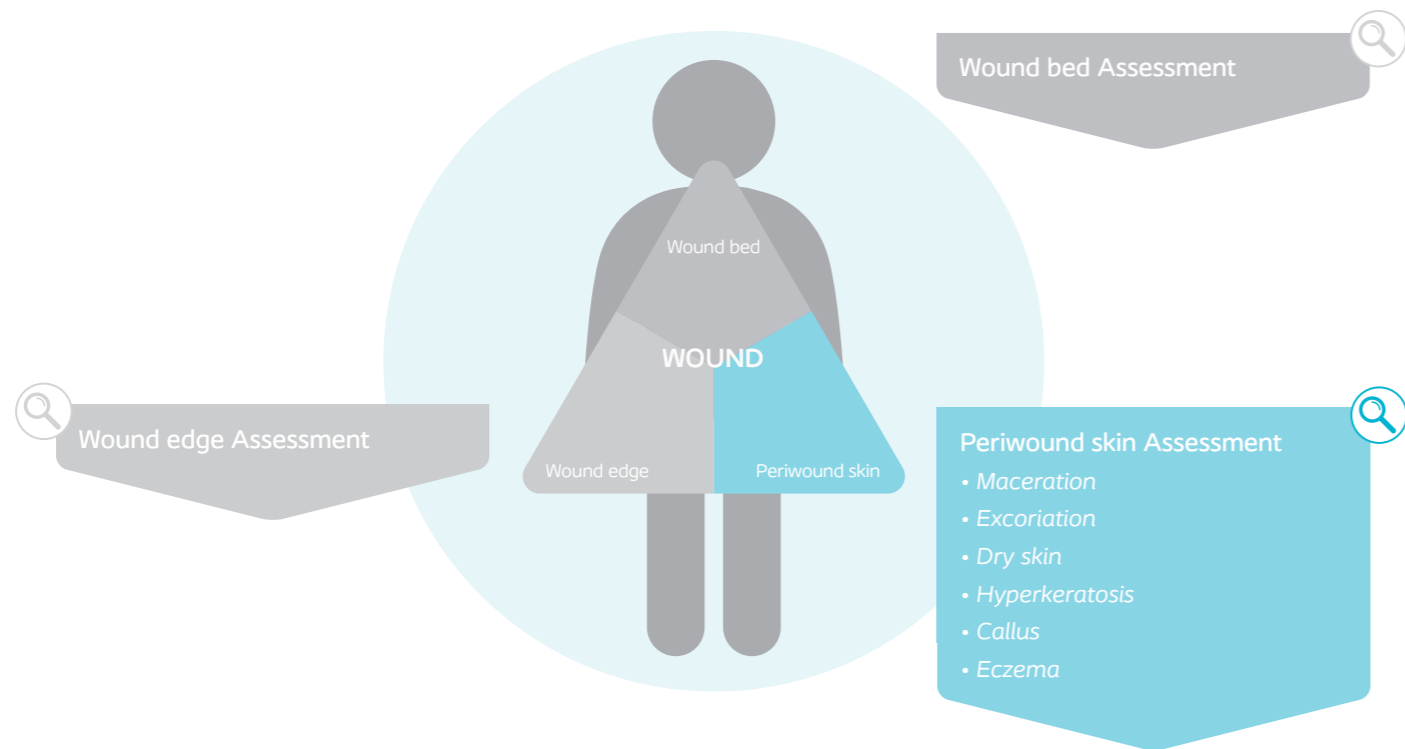
Wound edge Assessment

Maceration		<input type="checkbox"/>
Dehydration		<input type="checkbox"/>
Undermining		<input type="checkbox"/>
Rolled edges		<input type="checkbox"/>

Mark position
Extent: ____ cm

Periwound skin assessment

When damaged, the periwound skin (defined as skin within 4cm of the wound edge, or any skin under the dressing) can lead to delayed healing times as well as pain and discomfort for the patient.^{6,7,8}



- Periwound skin Assessment**
- Maceration
 - Excoriation
 - Dry skin
 - Hyperkeratosis
 - Callus
 - Eczema

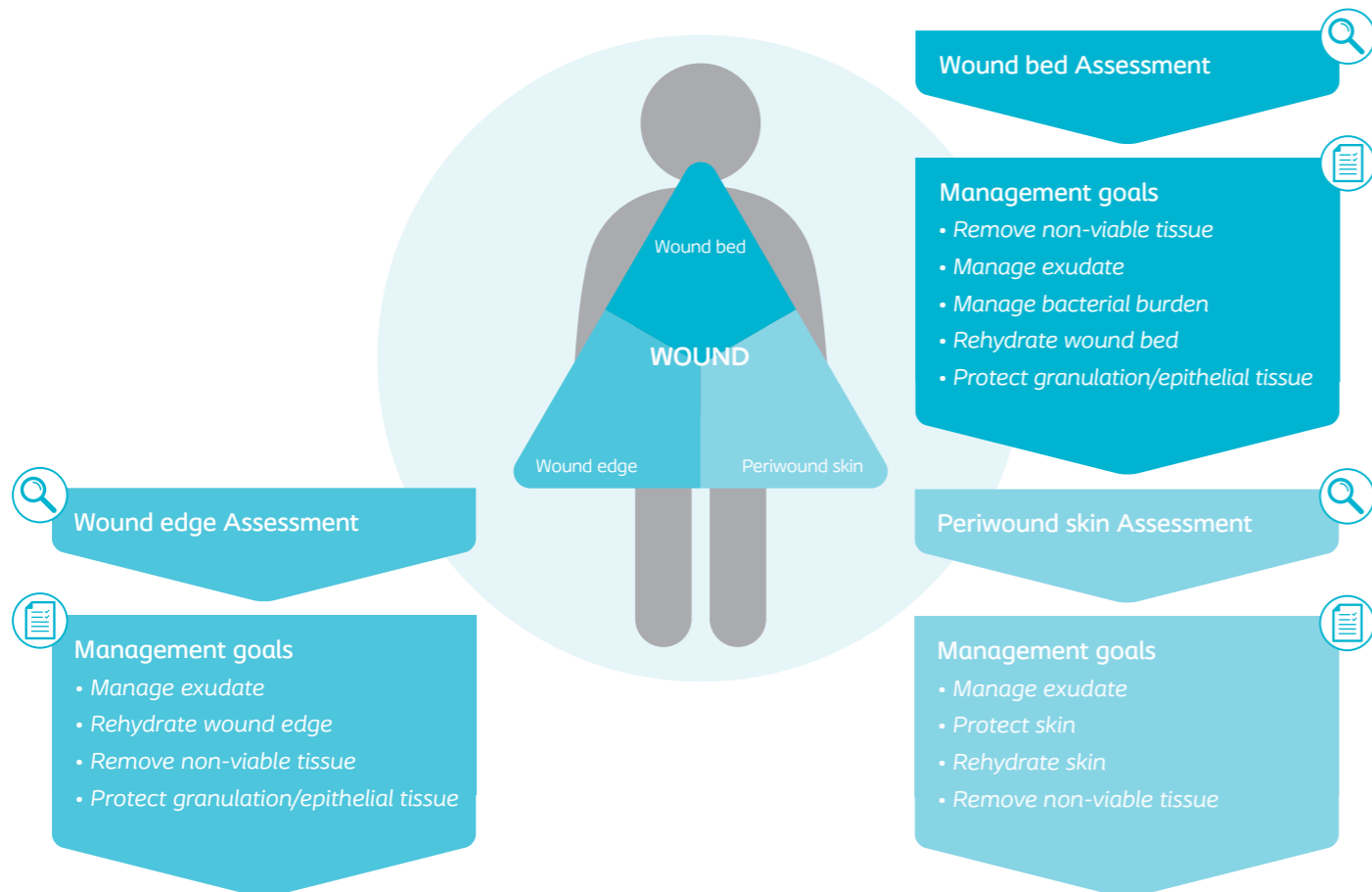
Periwound skin Assessment

Maceration		<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____ CM
Excoriation		<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____ CM
Dry skin		<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____ CM
Hyperkeratosis		<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____ CM
Callus		<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____ CM
Eczema		<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____ CM



From wound assessment to management goals

When setting management goals, it is important to consider assessment of all three areas, as well as the patient's expectations.



Wound bed

Assessment	Management goals	Treatment examples
Tissue type <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Necrotic • Sloughy 	<i>Remove non-viable tissue</i>	Debridement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Granulating • Epithelialising 	<i>Protect granulation/epithelial tissue</i>	Hydrocolloid
Exudate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dry 	<i>Rehydrate wound bed</i>	Hydrogel
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low • Medium • High 	<i>Manage exudate</i>	Appropriate dressing for exudate level (e.g. hydrocolloid for low, foam for high)
Infection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign of infection 	<i>Manage bacterial burden</i>	Antimicrobial



Wound edge

Assessment	Management goals	Treatment examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maceration 	<i>Manage exudate</i>	Appropriate dressing for exudate level (e.g. hydrocolloid for low, foam for high)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dehydration 	<i>Rehydrate wound edge</i>	Barrier cream
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undermining • Rolled edges 	<i>Remove non-viable tissue + Protect granulation/epithelial tissue</i>	Debridement + Hydrocolloid



Periwound skin

Assessment	Management goals	Treatment examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maceration 	<i>Manage exudate</i>	Appropriate dressing for exudate level (e.g. hydrocolloid for low, foam for high)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dry skin 	<i>Rehydrate skin</i>	Barrier cream
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excoriation • Eczema 	<i>Protect skin</i>	Barrier film
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hyperkeratosis • Callus 	<i>Remove non-viable tissue</i>	Debridement

Choosing the optimal treatment

An accurate wound assessment and setting of management goals allows for optimal treatment to be chosen at each assessment and reassessment of the wound.^{6,7,8}

Wound Assessment

Management Goals

Treatment

- Include primary and secondary dressings, and any skin care products if relevant
- Always consider the underlying cause of the wound and include any further treatment needed (e.g. compression therapy)
- Consider if referral to a specialist is needed

“The Triangle of Wound Assessment addresses all aspects of the holistic approach to wound management—assessment, diagnosis, treatment plan, documentation and communication. It is provided in a very clear, concise and practical way that helps the practitioner manage the patient and the wound”

Simon, Tissue Viability Nurse

Glossary of terms



Wound bed assessment

Tissue type

Necrotic

- Black, dead tissue, which contains dead cells and debris that are a consequence of the fragmentation of dying cells

Sloughy

- Yellow, fibrinous tissue that consists of fibrin, pus, and proteinaceous material

Granulating

- Red new connective tissue and microscopic blood vessels that form on the surfaces of a wound during the healing process

Epithelialising

- Pink/white tissue in the final stage of healing where epithelial cells resurface the wound

Exudate

Fluid from the wound

- In normal healing increases during inflammatory stage to cleanse the wound and provide a moist environment, which maximises healing
- In chronic wounds, this fluid is biochemically different, which break down the protein framework in the wound causing further tissue break down

Infection

- The presence of bacteria or other microorganisms in sufficient quantity to damage tissue or impair healing. Clinical signs of infection may not be present in patients who are immunocompromised, or those that have poor perfusion or a chronic wound



Wound edge assessment

Maceration

- Softening and breaking down of wound edge resulting from prolonged exposure to moisture and wound exudate. Frequently appears white

Dehydration

- Low moisture impairing cellular development and migration needed for new tissue growth

Undermining

- The destruction of tissue or ulceration extending under the wound edge so that the ulcer is larger at its base than at the skin surface

Rolled edges

- Epithelial tissue migrating down sides of the wound instead of across. Can present in wounds with inflammatory origin, including in cancer, and can result in poor healing outcomes if not addressed appropriately



Periwound skin assessment

Maceration

- Softening of the skin as a result of prolonged contact with moisture. Macerated skin looks white

Excoriation

- Caused by repeated injury to the surface of the skin body caused by trauma, e.g. scratching, abrasion, drug reactions or irritants

Dry skin

- Keratin cells become flat and scaly. The skin feels rough and flaking may be visible

Hyperkeratosis

- Excessive build up of dry skin (keratin) often on hands, heels, soles of feet

Callus

- Thickened and hardened part of the skin or soft tissue, especially in an area that has been subjected to friction or pressure

Eczema

- Inflammation of the skin, characterized by itchiness, red skin, and a rash



Management goals

Non-viable tissue

- Necrotic or sloughy tissue, which acts as a barrier to healing if left within the wound

Bacterial burden

- The number of microorganisms in the wound. At low levels with no signs of infection this is called contamination and colonisation, and no treatment is needed. However, at higher levels signs will start to show which indicate a localised or spreading infection

References

1. Dowsett C et al. Taking wound assessment beyond the edge. *Wounds International* 2015;6(1):19-23
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6. Dowsett C et al. Taking wound assessment beyond the edge. *Wounds International* 2015;6(1):19-23
7. Dowsett et al. The Triangle of Wound Assessment Made Easy. *Wounds International*. May 2015
8. Romanelli M et al. Advances in wound care: the Triangle of Wound Assessment *Wounds International*, 2016

How to get started with the Triangle of Wound Assessment

Visit the website, where you can learn more about how the Triangle of Wound Assessment can be implemented into clinical practice, as an assessment tool and as an educational framework.

You can also download tools to get started with implementing the Triangle of Wound Assessment in your practice, and get access to publications where you can read more.

To learn more visit:

www.triangleofwoundassessment.com

[Ostomy Care](#) / [Continence Care](#) / [Wound & Skin Care](#) / [Urology Care](#)

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