

title: "Chronic Wound Care at Home: Is Skilled Nursing the Answer in New Bern, NC?" description: "Learn when an older adult's wound may need skilled nursing care, which warning signs require prompt medical attention, and how New Bern families can support safer healing at home." author: "Always Best Care of New Bern" date: 2026-09-16 categories: ["Senior Health", "Home Health Care", "Post-Hospital Care"] tags: ["New Bern NC", "senior wound care", "skilled nursing", "home health", "pressure injuries", "diabetic foot ulcers"] featured_image: "/images/new-bern-senior-skilled-nursing-wound-care.jpg" canonical_url: ["https://alwaysbestcare.com/new-bern/resources/chronic-wound-care-at-home-is-skilled-nursing-the-answer-in-new-bern-nc"](https://alwaysbestcare.com/new-bern/resources/chronic-wound-care-at-home-is-skilled-nursing-the-answer-in-new-bern-nc) slug: "chronic-wound-care-at-home-is-skilled-nursing-the-answer-in-new-bern-nc" meta_title: "Chronic Wound Care and Skilled Nursing | New Bern, NC" draft: false

Chronic Wound Care at Home: Is Skilled Nursing the Answer in New Bern, NC?

Healing a wound at home can sound straightforward: clean it, cover it, and wait. But for older adults, that process is rarely so simple. Age-related changes in skin, circulation, and immune function can turn a minor cut into a serious medical concern. Knowing when basic home care may be enough and when to call in a skilled nurse can make a meaningful difference in how safely a loved one recovers.

What Readers Will Learn

- Why wounds can be more difficult to heal in older adults.
- Which wound types may need skilled nursing oversight.

- Warning signs that a wound may be worsening.
- How skilled home health nurses and in-home caregivers can support recovery.
- Practical ways to help prevent pressure injuries at home.

How Aging Changes Wound Healing

Skin becomes thinner and more fragile with age, losing some of the elasticity and protective barrier function it once had. This can make seniors more vulnerable to cuts, skin tears, and pressure injuries, as well as slower recovery from them.

Several factors can compound this challenge:

- **Chronic conditions:** Diabetes and peripheral artery disease can reduce blood flow to the extremities, limiting oxygen and nutrients needed for tissue repair.
- **Medications:** Blood thinners, steroids, and immunosuppressants can affect clotting, tissue repair, or immune response.
- **Nutritional deficiencies:** Inadequate protein, vitamin C, zinc, and fluid intake can directly affect healing.
- **Reduced mobility:** Less movement can increase the risk of pressure injuries, particularly for seniors who spend much of the day in bed or use a wheelchair.

Understanding these factors helps families recognize why a wound that might heal quickly in a younger person can linger or worsen in an older adult.

Wounds That Often Need Skilled Nursing

Not every wound needs a home health nurse, but some types have enough complexity or risk that professional oversight may be recommended by a healthcare provider.

Surgical Incisions

Surgical incisions can need ongoing monitoring for proper closure, drainage, infection, and reopening after a hospital discharge.

Pressure Injuries

Pressure injuries, also known as bedsores, form when sustained pressure reduces blood flow to the skin. Open or worsening pressure injuries should be assessed by a healthcare professional.

Diabetic Foot Ulcers

Diabetic foot ulcers have a high risk of infection and serious complications. Diabetes can reduce sensation, meaning these wounds may not be noticed until they have worsened.

Venous or Arterial Ulcers

Poor circulation can cause chronic leg wounds that may need specialized dressings, prescribed compression therapy, and regular clinical monitoring.

Skin Tears, Burns, and Infected Wounds

Fragile skin wounds that will not stay closed, burns beyond minor superficial injuries, infected wounds, and wounds that have stalled despite basic care should be evaluated professionally.

If a wound falls into one of these categories, ask the physician whether a home health referral or wound-care evaluation is appropriate.

Warning Signs a Wound Is Getting Worse

Even a wound that starts out manageable can deteriorate. Contact a healthcare provider promptly if you notice:

- Increasing redness, warmth, or swelling around the wound edges.
- Cloudy, yellow, green, or foul-smelling drainage.
- Wound edges separating rather than closing.
- Dark or blackened tissue in or around the wound.
- Fever, chills, or sudden confusion.
- No visible improvement with consistent care.

- Worsening or uncontrolled pain.

Seniors with diabetes, compromised immune systems, or poor circulation should be evaluated sooner rather than later because infections can escalate quickly.

When It's an Emergency

Call 911 or seek emergency care immediately for uncontrolled bleeding, loss of consciousness, severe difficulty breathing, signs of a severe allergic reaction, or sudden severe illness. For spreading redness, fever, new confusion, rapid wound deterioration, or worsening pain, contact the home health agency, wound-care clinician, or physician immediately for urgent direction.

What a Skilled Home Health Nurse Does

When a physician orders skilled nursing as part of a home health plan, a licensed nurse can visit the patient at home to provide clinical wound care. This goes beyond what most families can safely manage on their own.

Skilled nursing wound care may include:

- **Wound assessment:** Measuring wound size and depth, assessing tissue, documenting drainage, and tracking healing progress.
- **Wound cleaning and ordered treatment:** Cleaning the wound and providing ordered treatments, including debridement when clinically appropriate and within the clinician's scope.
- **Advanced dressing changes:** Applying prescribed dressings based on the wound's characteristics and stage of healing.
- **Infection monitoring:** Identifying early signs of infection and coordinating with the physician or care team.
- **Patient and caregiver education:** Teaching families how to protect the wound between visits and what changes to report.
- **Care coordination:** Communicating updates to the broader healthcare team.

This level of care can be especially valuable after a hospital discharge, surgery, or rehabilitation stay, when wounds are in early healing stages and complication risk may be higher.

Preventing Pressure Injuries

For seniors with limited mobility, prevention is as important as treatment. Pressure injuries can develop when sustained pressure restricts blood flow to the skin, usually over bony areas such as the heels, hips, tailbone, and elbows.

Preventive strategies may include:

- Repositioning according to the person's individualized care plan.
- Using prescribed pressure-relieving mattresses, cushions, or heel protectors.
- Keeping skin clean and dry, particularly in moisture-prone areas.
- Supporting adequate nutrition and hydration to promote skin integrity.
- Checking the skin every day to catch early redness or signs of breakdown.

A home health nurse can assess a senior's pressure-injury risk and help recommend a prevention plan tailored to the individual.

How In-Home Caregivers Support Healing

Skilled nursing addresses the clinical side of wound care, but recovery also depends on consistent day-to-day support. In-home caregivers can provide important non-clinical help by:

- Assisting with personal hygiene while protecting wound sites.
- Preparing nutritious meals that support healing.
- Encouraging fluid intake.
- Helping with mobility and repositioning according to the care plan.
- Providing medication reminders.
- Observing and reporting changes in the wound or the senior's overall condition.

When home health nurses and in-home caregivers work as a coordinated team, seniors can receive both clinical expertise and the practical support needed to heal more safely at home.

Supporting Recovery in New Bern

Complex wound care does not have to fall entirely on families. With the right professional support, many seniors can recover at home in a familiar environment, close to the people they love.

Always Best Care of New Bern provides services designed to help older adults recover safely and comfortably. Depending on your loved one's needs and the services available in the area, support may include skilled nursing through a home health referral and in-home caregivers who assist with daily tasks during recovery.

Contact Always Best Care of New Bern at (252) 669-0023 to learn more and schedule your free consultation.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: When should I call a doctor about a wound instead of treating it at home?

A: Contact a healthcare provider if the wound is deep, will not stop bleeding, shows infection signs such as redness, swelling, warmth, drainage, or odor, or is not improving as expected. Seniors with diabetes or circulation concerns should seek guidance sooner.

Q: Does Medicare cover skilled nursing for wound care at home?

A: Medicare may cover eligible home health services, including skilled nursing for wound care, when care is medically necessary, ordered by a qualifying provider, and the person meets applicable coverage requirements. Eligibility is determined individually. Confirm current coverage details with the healthcare provider, home health agency, or Medicare.

Q: What is the difference between a home health nurse and an in-home caregiver?

A: A home health nurse is a licensed medical professional who provides clinical care, such as wound assessment, ordered dressing changes, and infection monitoring, under a

provider-directed plan. An in-home caregiver provides non-medical help with bathing, meals, mobility, medication reminders, and companionship.

Q: How often will a nurse visit for wound care?

A: Visit frequency depends on the wound type and severity, the physician's orders, and the patient's overall health. Some wounds may need frequent visits initially, while others need nursing care a few times per week. The schedule can be reassessed as healing progresses.

Q: Can pressure injuries be treated at home, or do they require hospitalization?

A: Some pressure injuries may be treated at home when a healthcare provider determines home-based care is appropriate. Advanced, infected, or rapidly worsening injuries may require specialist involvement or a higher level of care. The treating provider should guide the right care setting.

Sources

- [National Institute on Aging: Skin Care and Aging](#)
- [Medicare: Home Health Services Coverage](#)
- [Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nurses Society](#)
- [American Diabetes Association: Foot Complications](#)
- [MedlinePlus: Pressure Sores](#)
- [Johns Hopkins Medicine: Wound Care](#)