



Prevent Summertime Skin Wounds



Athena Beis
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In recognition of Wound Care Awareness Month in June, Salem Regional Medical Center's (SRMC) Wound Healing Center is offering tips to protect skin from summertime wounds.

"Your skin is the largest organ in your body and the first line of defense against disease-causing germs, bacteria and viruses," explained Athena Beis, M.D., CWSP, Medical Director of SRMC's Wound Healing Center. "Summer brings its own special challenges, with common skin injuries occurring as a result of sunburns, grilling injuries, bug bites, poison ivy, splinters or scratches. Open wounds may become infected and lead to complications, especially in people with chronic conditions like diabetes and heart disease that can impact wound healing."

Tips to Protect Skin from Summertime Wounds

- **Don't Walk Outside Barefoot:** Stepping on materials such as rocks or broken glass can break the skin and cause infection.
- **Wear Properly Fitted Shoes:** Choose footwear that does not rub or pinch feet and avoid shoes like flip-flops, which don't offer good support and can cause blisters.
- **Protect Skin from the Sun:** Prevent sunburns by using a sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or higher, protective clothing and stay in the shade.
- **Prevent Bug Bites:** Apply insect repellent and cover exposed skin, especially when you're outside at night or are in a densely-wooded area.
- **Check Feet and Legs:** Examine your feet and legs daily for any red spots, cuts, swelling, blisters, sores or other injuries.

Dr. Beis suggests making an appointment with a health care provider for wounds that don't heal within 30 days or show signs of infection.

"If you have a sore with increasing pain, redness, swelling, foul odor or change in color, talk to your doctor," she advised. "When left untreated, non-healing wounds may lead to serious health problems and greatly limit your mobility and quality of life."

About SRMC's Wound Healing Center

SRMC's Wound Healing Center offers hyperbaric oxygen therapy and other advanced treatment options for chronic and non-healing wounds, including:

- Diabetic, venous/arterial and pressure ulcers

- Osteomyelitis (bone infection)
- Radionecrosis
- Infections
- Compromised skin grafts and flaps
- Insect bites
- Thermal burns
- Wounds that have not healed in 30 days

The Wound Healing Center is recognized as a “Center of Distinction” by Healogics, Inc., the nation’s leading and largest wound care management company. The Center has earned this prestigious national award three years in a row, for demonstrating continued clinical excellence in wound healing and superior patient satisfaction rates.

For more information about the specialized care provided at SRMC’s Wound Healing Center or to make an appointment, call 330-332-7415.