

Don't Wait for Wound Care

When it comes to wound care, patience may not be a virtue

Imagine having a blister on your foot but not feeling the pain. With each step you take, the blister gets worse because of the constant pressure.

What was once a small blister becomes a larger, non-healing wound. While feeling no pain may sound fine, it may actually be life-altering.

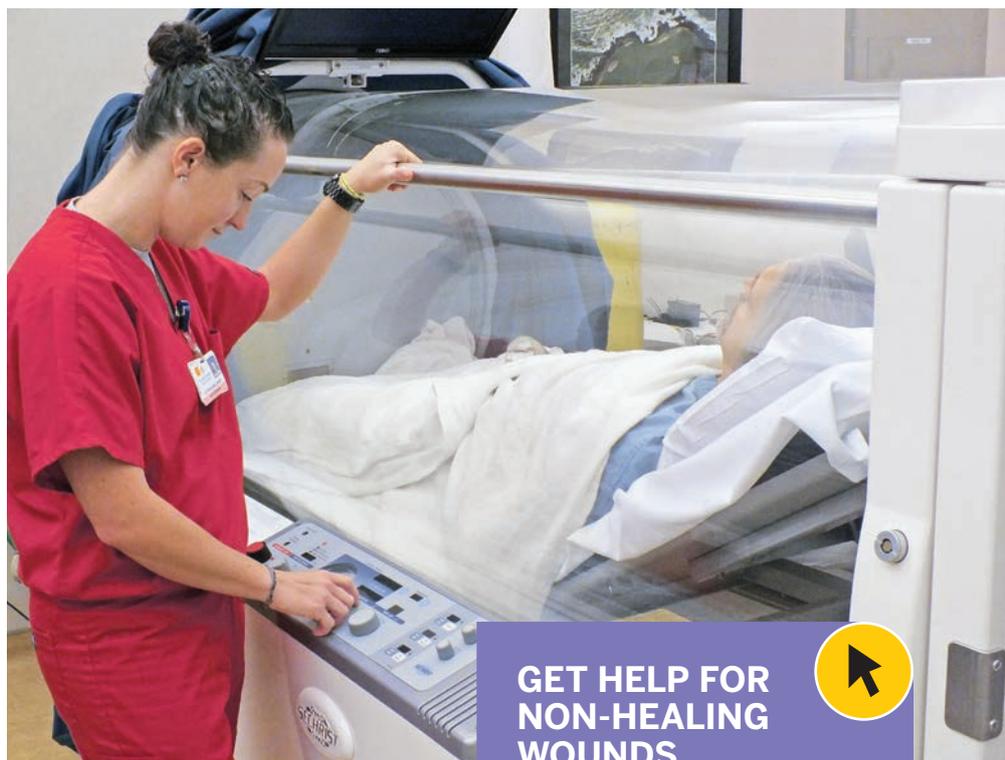
Chronic non-healing wounds are common with people who have diabetes and blood flow issues (arterial and venous), or those who are at risk of developing pressure wounds due to difficulty moving or inability to easily change position while seated or in bed.

“A chronic non-healing wound in and of itself is not a disease; it is the result of an underlying condition,” says Eric C. Segerberg, M.D., board-certified general surgeon and medical director of the Southeast Georgia Health System Wound Care Center. The Health System operates the Center in conjunction with Healogics, the nation’s largest wound care provider.

“The incidence of chronic wounds are more common than one might think, fueled by an aging population and increasing rates of diseases and conditions such as diabetes, obesity and the late effects of radiation therapy,” says Dr. Segerberg. “The Wound Care Center specializes in treating these types of wounds.”

When should you seek treatment for a troublesome wound? According to a Healogics study, two-thirds of patients who seek specialized wound care within 30 days of suffering a wound healed within one month. The average healing time at the Health System’s Wound Care Center is 21 days.

“Any wound that does not heal within four weeks is considered a chronic wound needing specialized care,” says Meredith Reilly, director, Wound Care Center. “One of the biggest challenges in healing wounds is people waiting too long to seek treatment. When people seek treatment early,



Kathryn Mellinger, HBO technician, administers hyperbaric oxygen therapy to patient Steven Weaver.

we have the ability to heal that wound much faster and the outcomes are more favorable for the patient.”

Left untreated, chronic wounds can lead to diminished quality of life and possibly amputation of the affected limb. Advanced wound care, as part of a comprehensive care plan, can help heal patients faster than traditional methods. In addition to hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBO), advanced wound care can include negative pressure wound therapy, bioengineered skin substitutes, biological and biosynthetic dressings and growth factor therapies.

“Early intervention can mean escaping an infection that bores into the bone, causes organs to shut down or requires an amputation,” explains Ashley Holland, R.N., clinical nurse

GET HELP FOR NON-HEALING WOUNDS

To learn more or to schedule an appointment at the Southeast Georgia Health System Wound Care Center, please call **912-466-5350** or visit **sghs.org/woundcare**.

manager. “Timely attention to infection warning signs, such as redness around the wound, any drainage with odor, fever or chills, greatly influences our ability to treat the infection and positively impact the outcome.”

Depending on the wound, treatments may include antibiotics, relieving pressure on a sore, debridement to remove necrotic tissue or compression therapy. Some patients may be prescribed HBO, which aids the body’s natural healing properties, activates infection-fighting white blood cells and regenerates new tissue. •