Help prevent skin tears in aged care facilities

Skin tears aren’t just painful; they can be expensive to treat, costing patients an estimated $10,000 per year\(^1\) – money many elderly people simply can't spare. They can lead to ulcers, infection, distressed patients, families and prolonged hospital stays. The annual chronic wound care costs in Australia are $2.85 billion direct to hospitals and aged care facilities.\(^1\)

### The Program

1. **Do Skin Tear Audit**
   - Do an audit of patient records in your facility and determine the number of skin tears that have occurred over the last 6 or 12 months (as a baseline)
   - Calculate the average number of skin tears per resident per month

2. **Select Residents to Include**
   - You may choose to include all residents in the Prevention Program or select a representative sample
   - Decide how long you want the program to last, eg. 3 months or 6 months

3. **Inform Staff and Residents**
   - Make care staff aware of the expected benefits of the Prevention Program
   - Explain their responsibilities for the Prevention Program – ie. adding QV Skin Lotion to the resident’s daily schedules

4. **Label Each Resident’s QV Skin Lotion**
   - Attach the adhesive labels supplied to each resident’s QV Skin Lotion as a reminder

5. **Apply QV Skin Lotion Twice-Daily**
   - Gently apply QV Skin Lotion to the arms and legs of each resident twice at appropriate times, eg. immediately after bathing/showering
   - Tick off each application of QV Skin Lotion on the patient’s bottle label

6. **Report any Skin Tears**
   - Ensure all care staff report any skin tears that occur
   - Classify the skin tear using the STAR Skin Tear Classification System and note where it is on the body

7. **Record Program Results**
   - Calculate the average number of skin tears per resident per month during the Prevention Program
   - Compare the results with the baseline results to quantify the reduction in skin tears

---

\(^1\) Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2019)
The following support materials are enclosed in a kit:

1. STAR Skin Tear Classification System Guidelines
   Assesses the skin and any remnant flap for haematoma and ischaemia, which could affect tissue viability

2. Wound Measuring Ruler
   Disposable ruler to measure wounds

3. Trial Summary Report
   Record findings here

4. Skin Tear Handbook
   Contains information about skin tears and the program

5. Adhesive Bottle Label
   Attached to residents QV lotion and record twice-daily applications of the moisturiser