

Expert Wound Care Heals Butler Woman

When Butler resident Patsy Withrow broke her right heel in February 2016, she had no idea the injury would turn into a difficult-to-heal wound requiring months and months of treatment.

“I had surgery to repair the heel, but it didn’t hold,” Patsy says. Instead, inserting the plate and screws to make the repair, then removing them, left her with a wound that just wouldn’t heal.

After a brief stay in a nursing home, Patsy began seeing the Wound Care team at Bates County Memorial Hospital (BCMh), hoping they could help.

In existence for nearly two decades, the program features three health care professionals who are all certified in wound care by the Wound Care Education Institute. They include Jaime Marsh, P.T., WCC; Kennette Bilyeu, P.T., WCC; and Andrea Brown, P.T.A., WCC. Kennette also is a CLS-certified lymphedema specialist and is diabetic wound certified.

Together, they take care of patients with wounds resulting from pressure ulcers, burns, surgeries or diabetes, and which have not healed with conventional treatment.

Often these patients require two to three visits with a wound care specialist initially to get their wound care under control, then they can reduce the frequency of visits as the wound heals.

That was the case for Patsy. “At first, I came for treatments three times a week,” she says. “I’ve seen Jaime, Kennette and Andrea. They’ve all done a marvelous job!”

Complicating Patsy’s wound care was the fact that she also has diabetes. Many other patients have a wide range of health issues that prevent their wounds from healing, too. These include:

- Infection
- Something inside the wound (piece of wood, glass, etc.)
- Poor health
- Smoking
- Some medications
- Out-of-control diabetes
- A poorly functioning immune system
- Age (the healing processes slows down as age increases)
- Skin cancer

The BCMh Wound Care team specializes in using a variety of wound care products, including the wound vac. “The wound vac is a negative pressure wound therapy that includes placing a foam dressing in the wound bed, then using a tube hooked to a small canister to basically vacuum the infection out of the wound,” explains Jaime. “The treatment increases blood flow and helps control the bacterial load. It’s very successful when used in patients who have heavily draining wounds.”

Other treatments available include:

- Wound debridement for stubborn necrotic tissue, including bio-debridement

- Pulse lavage
- Dressing changes
- Compression therapy for venous ulcers or lymphedema
- Advanced wound care products

“Jaime, Kennette and Andrea have created a wound care program that is a highlight of our hospital and a great service to the county,” says Scott Ridings, Director of BCMH Rehabilitation Services. “They work in collaboration with our physicians and surgeons to provide our patients with a level of care not readily available, even at facilities in the city.”

Patsy agrees. Though her wound isn’t completely healed, it’s gone from three to four inches in width at its peak, to smaller than a dime. “I’m hoping my foot will be completely healed by Christmas, but it’s a very slow process.

“The work they are doing for me at BCMH has been wonderful,” Patsy adds. “I’m proud of our hospital. I wouldn’t think of going anywhere else!”

Contact the hospital’s Rehabilitation Services Department at 660-200-7073 to schedule an appointment with one of the certified wound care specialists.

Do You Need Advanced Wound Care?

Often, patients wait to see if their wound or sore will heal on its own, only to have it grow larger and become infected. In addition, the team says home remedies, like peroxide or rubbing alcohol, can make the wound worse.

According to the BCMH Wound Care team, see your doctor immediately if you experience any of these signs that your wound isn’t healing:

- Redness and increased swelling
- Soreness and pain
- Odor
- Increased drainage