



## Delayed Wound Healing

### What is delayed wound healing?

Delayed wound healing is when a wound takes longer than normal to heal. [Chemotherapy](#), [targeted therapy](#), and [radiation therapy](#) can slow wound healing. These cancer treatments affect how your body works and its ability to heal.

Delayed wound healing from chemotherapy is often temporary (it will go away). It is often caused by a weakened immune system and poor nutrition. Normal wound healing tends to return when you are done chemotherapy treatment. If you have had surgery first (called neoadjuvant therapy), your surgeon will work with your oncologist to choose a safe time to start chemotherapy.

There are a few chemotherapies that can impact wound healing, and you may need a longer time to heal before starting these medications. Some chemotherapy medications that can cause delayed wound healing are [doxorubicin](#), [cyclophosphamide](#), and [cisplatin](#).

Targeted therapy medications work by attaching to a specific target in the cancer cell that helps cancer grow and spread. Some of these targets are also found on healthy skin cells, which can affect wound healing. Some targeted therapies that can cause delayed wound healing are [cetuximab](#), [erlotinib](#), and [bevacizumab](#).

Radiation therapy may cause permanent (it will not go away) tissue damage in the area that has been treated. This can affect how your wounds heal. Wound healing is affected by the amount (dose, fractions) of radiation treatment received.

### How is it treated?

If you have a wound, your care team will teach you how to care for your wound and skin to help with healing and to prevent tissue damage, both during and after treatment. Home care services can also help with wound care. Your care team will watch your wounds closely.

### When should I call my care team?

If your wound has signs of infection, you should call your provider right away. Signs of infection are:

- Redness.
- A strong smell from the wound.
- More pus or drainage than normal from the wound.

Call your care team right away if you have these symptoms or if you have a fever. Long-term tissue damage may happen years after radiation treatment. If you have new wounds or sores, call your care provider. Do not put anything on the wound before speaking to your provider.

---

OncoLink is designed for educational purposes only and is not engaged in rendering medical advice or professional services. The information provided through OncoLink should not be used for diagnosing or treating a health problem or a disease. It is not a substitute for professional care. If you have or suspect you may have a health problem or have questions or concerns about the medication that you have been prescribed, you should consult your health care provider.