

Script – Print - Time Doesn't Heal All Wounds

OSF HealthCare offers wound healing services and procedures

The old saying goes, "time heals all wounds." Don't tell that to the more than six-and-a-half-million Americans who are affected by chronic wounds, like diabetic foot ulcers.

And predictions are that number will increase by two percent annually over the next decade. Obesity, vascular disease, an aging population and radiation treatment side-effects are all underlying causes for the expected jump in chronic wound cases.

Recognizing this need, OSF HealthCare has made a significant investment in establishing programs to serve these patients. Rockford's OSF Saint Anthony Wound Healing Center has been in operation for a decade.

The center's medical director, Dr. Les Edgcomb, has dedicated more than 20 years to wound treatment and says, in that time, there have been significant advancements.

"We've gone through many generations of products," says Dr. Les Edgcomb, Medical Director of the OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony Wound Healing Center. "We have skin substitutes. We have hyperbaric oxygen therapy. We have a significant advancement of knowledge of wounds and nutrition, radiation therapy - all of which contribute to our understanding of wound care."

He also credits the patients who must endure an extensive treatment process - which is on average eight to ten weeks, depending on the severity of the wound.

Dr. Edgcomb says the wound center's team approach, with two general surgeons, two internists, a podiatrist, an advanced wound care nurse practitioner, a wound care services manager and five nurses, has resulted in a patient healing rate well above 90-percent and a more than 90-percent satisfaction rate.

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"Some of the trauma patients are young patients," says Dr. Les Edgcomb, Medical Director of the OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony Wound Healing Center. "We have several who have had trauma to their limbs and they have chronic osteomyelitis. They end up with the chamber experience. We have patients who have vascular disease, they are sometimes middle aged or older and are sometimes helped with hyperbaric oxygen. The diabetic patient usually have to experience their disease for an extended period of time before they develop some sort of problem, such as peripheral neuropathy resulting in a diabetic foot ulcer. And so, they sometimes subjected to hyperbaric therapy."

Most symptom-related chronic wounds occur on the legs or pressure points.

Patients who suspect they may have a chronic wound should first consult with their primary care physician to determine if they need to be referred to the wound center.

Once treated, there may be some ongoing maintenance and follow-up.

"If it's a trauma-associated wound, a lot of times it doesn't reoccur," says Dr. Les Edgcomb, Medical Director of the OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony Wound Healing Center. "If it's a pressure-associated wound, depending on the situation, it may reoccur. If it's a diabetic-associated wound, that's an ongoing

problem that the patient really has to take care of. And we try to give them as much counseling as possible at the end of the experience to maintain healing."

In celebration of its 10 years of service, the OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony Wound Healing Center is holding a public open house from 4 to 6 p.m. on October 30 at 5668 East State Street, Suite 1500, Rockford.

There are also wound care programs at OSF facilities in Peoria, Bloomington, Galesburg and Ottawa, Illinois - as well as Escanaba, Michigan.