

### Skin Tear

#### WHAT IS IT?

A skin tear usually occurs when fragile skin bumps against a hard surface, such as a shin on a coffee table or a hand reaching into an open drawer, causing the top layers of skin to be moved and torn from the surrounding skin.

As people age they tend to have thinner skin and therefore are at higher risk of getting skin tears. The cause is usually minor trauma such as hitting a shin on an open dishwasher door or the back of a hand on a hard surface.

#### WHAT CAN I DO MYSELF (DIY)?

**Long sleeves, long pants and soft gloves** give some protection, but you may need extra padding on some bony areas of your body. For example, soccer shin pads can be worn under pants and provide an extra layer between you and the edges of hard furniture. You may also need to **reduce the number of injury-causing items from your living space**, so say goodbye to that hard wooden coffee table!

#### THE KEY RULE

**Prevent skin tears by creating a safe environment and choosing the right protective clothing.**

#### WHEN DO I CALL IN A PRO?

Health-care professionals, such as nurses and occupational therapists, can help you prevent skin tears through proper skin hygiene and moisturizing, safe bathing, good nutrition, the right kind of clothing and the removal of physical hazards in your home, car or workplace.

#### WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Another set of free resources, called the [Care at Home series](#), may also be of interest to you.

