WHAT YOU CAN DO TO PREVENT SKIN TEARS

WHAT IS A SKIN TEAR?

A skin tear is a break in the skin most commonly caused by knocks, falls or when you are being helped with mobility or personal care.

Skin tears can occur anywhere on the body, however you are more at risk of developing them on your hands, arms and legs.

Am I at risk?

You are more at risk if you:

- Are over 75 years of age
- Have dry, thin, fragile skin
- Take lots of medication (especially steroids or blood thinners)
- Bruise easily
- Have reduced mobility
- Have impaired vision/hearing loss
- Experience dizziness
- Have low blood pressure
- Have a history of falls
- Have poor nutrition
- Are dehydrated
- Are forgetful or have dementia
- Have heart problems
- Have kidney problems
- Are dependant on others for help with personal care, dressing and mobilising

10 STEPS TO HELP PREVENT SKIN TEARS

1. Eat a healthy diet and drink fluids regularly throughout the day to keep your skin healthy and hydrated.

2. Wear tops with long sleeves to provide extra protection.

3. Wear trousers, socks or tights on your legs to provide extra protection.

4. Apply a non-perfumed cream to your skin every day, twice a day if you can, to arms and legs to maintain hydration of the skin. Apply the cream in the direction of the hair growth; elbow to hand or knee to toe.

5. If you need help, ask your carer not to wear rings or watches when providing personal care as this can scratch/damage your skin.

6. Ask your carer to keep their nails short when assisting you so you don't get scratched.

7. Keep your own fingernails short to prevent you causing skin tears to yourself.

8. Remove unwanted furniture to reduce the risk of knocks or bumps.

9. Upholster or pad sharp borders of furniture/bed and check wheelchairs/walking frames for sharp edges.

10. Remove rugs and keep the floor clear to reduce the risk of falling and skin damage that is often caused by slips and falls.

Talk to a carer or health care professional
If you are worried talk to a professional to get help with these tips
For medical advice call 111