CASE STUDY

Skin Tear Healing Improved Through the Use Of PolyMem Dressings

BEFORE

AFTER
**CASE STUDY**

**Skin Tear Healing Improved Through the Use of PolyMem Dressings**

**DAISIE WILSON RNC, MPA, ET-CWCN**, Carlyle Nursing Associates LLC, 8140 River Drive, Morton Grove, IL 60053

**PROBLEM**

Skin Tears were difficult and costly to manage. In this facility 60% of skin tears treated became infected, develop cellulitis and required antibiotic treatment. The facility’s treatment procedure included triple antibiotic ointment, thin adhesive strips and daily dressing changes of gauze 4x4s with a gauze wrap. The skin tears managed in this way regularly became infected, which prolonged the healing time. Infected skin tears often took over 20 days to resolve the infection and completely heal. The patient pictured is on warfarin with low hemoglobin, low hematocrit.

**IMPROVED SKIN TEAR PROTOCOL DEVELOPMENT**

After thorough problem analysis and evaluation of various treatments, the author determined the most effective skin tear management technique was to use PolyMem formulation dressings. By developing a simple-to-use Skin Tear Protocol that included PolyMem, the wounds heal without incident and significantly reduced expenses. The wounds treated with this new protocol are reliably free from the signs and symptoms of infection. The wounds are usually completely healed in 5 - 10 days, depending on the size of the initial wound and the resident’s health status. Typically only 3 dressing changes are required for the entire course of the skin tear healing process.

**PATIENT OUTCOME**

After success in the first test facility, the protocol was replicated in a total of 8 long term care facilities with the same excellent outcomes in each facility. The facilities ranged from small rural facilities with limited RN support to large urban facilities.

**CARLYLE NURSING ASSOCIATES SKIN TEAR PROTOCOL BENEFITS**

The new protocol has reduced the cost of skin tear care by:

1. Reducing the number of dressing changes needed, conserving nursing time for other tasks;
2. Reducing the nursing time required for each dressing change because the dressing change protocol is much simpler than with other dressings;
3. Reducing the percent of skin tears that become infected from 60% to less than 1%, which saves supply costs, nursing time costs and the cost of treating the complications;

Additionally, the PolyMem dressings reliably and reproducibly relieve the pain associated with skin tears both during dressing changes and during activities of daily living. The PolyMem and Shapes by PolyMem™ island dressings stay in place well and the residents find the adhesive on the island dressing to be very comfortable.

**CONCLUSION**

The use of the Carlyle Nursing Associates’ Skin Tear Protocol

- improves outcomes,
- reduces infections,
- speeds skin tear healing compared to the previous protocol,
- reduces overall costs for the care of skin tears,
- helps relieve the resident’s pain associated with skin tears.

The fact that the improved protocol has been successfully implemented in 8 different facilities, representing a wide variety of patient profiles with a wide variety of nursing staff, suggests that others can also implement the protocol with excellent success.
OBJECTIVES

1. Discuss complications associated with skin tears, such as infection, delayed healing and pain.
2. Consider the benefits of implementing a reliable, easy to standardize skin tear protocol for use in all care settings.
3. Identify that PolyMem dressings are used to relieve pain associated with skin tears.
4. Recognize that PolyMem dressings facilitate cost effective rapid healing of skin tears.

This case study was unsponsored.
BIBLIOGRAPHY:


ORIGINAL POSTER PRESENTED AT*:

19th Annual Symposium on Advanced Wound Care (SAWC). Poster #341, April 30 – May 3, 2006. San Antonio, TX USA.
21st Annual Clinical Symposium on Advances in Skin & Wound Care. Poster #61, Sept 28 – Oct 1, 2006. Orlando, FL USA.

* This version has been modified from the original; it reflects PolyMem branding.