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He ahu umanga ngaio hei whakamahu poka

**Advancing Practice and Knowledge in Wound Management**

# Wound Awareness Week 24 - 30 August 2020

## Presenting: Skin Tears

# Presented By

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- Maria Schollum - NP, RN, BN, PG  
Dip.HSc, MHSc (Hons)
- Nurse Practitioner – Waikato DHB

A Nurse Practitioner in long term conditions across the lifespan with an interest in skin integrity, incorporating advanced assessment, diagnosis and management of complex and chronic wounds across primary, secondary and tertiary health settings.

# Content

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Section 1: Definition, prevalence, causes, risk factors

Section 2: Prevention

**Section 3: Assessment and management**



# Section 3 – Assessment and Management

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- Initial treatment and management
- Validated skin tear classification systems
- Documentation and reporting
- Recommended dressings
- Dressing tips

# Initial Skin Tear Management

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## Prevent Cross-infection

- hand hygiene / wear gloves

## Control bleeding

- apply wound pressure 10-15 min or until bleeding stops
- elevate the limb if possible <sup>2</sup>

## Cleanse and irrigate

- to remove any residual clot/debris <sup>2</sup>
- if bleeding re-occurs control bleeding and review skin tear within next 12-24 hours



# Initial Skin Tear Management

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## **Preserve and gently realign the skin flap**

- use a moistened and gloved finger, tweezers or damp gauze, be careful not to stretch the flap <sup>2, 6</sup>

## **If delayed treatment and skin flap has dried**

- apply a saline gauze soak for 10 - 20 minutes to re-hydrate the flap, then realign <sup>2, 5</sup>

## **Protect the intact skin**

- dry the surrounding skin and use a 'barrier' wipe to protect intact skin from exudate and dressing adhesive



# Skin Tear Classification Systems <sup>1, 4</sup>

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The accurate identification of skin tears is vital to ensuring optimal management and implementation of preventative strategies.

- Skin Tear Audit Research (STAR) classification system <sup>1, 4</sup>
- International Skin Tear Advisory Panel (ISTAP) classification system <sup>2</sup>
- No tool is recommended over the other; it is important to be consistent using the same classification system



# STAR Classification System <sup>1, 4</sup>

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## STAR Category 1a

A skin tear where the edges **can** be realigned to the normal anatomical position (without undue stretching) and the skin or flap colour **is not** pale, dusky or darkened.



## STAR Category 1b

A skin tear where the edges **can** be realigned to the normal anatomical position (without undue stretching) and the skin or flap colour **is** pale, dusky or darkened.



# STAR Classification System <sup>1, 4</sup>

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## **STAR Category 2a**

A skin tear where the edges **cannot** be realigned to the normal anatomical position and the skin flap colour **is not** pale, dusky or darkened.



## **STAR Category 2b**

A skin tear where the edges **cannot** be realigned to the normal anatomical position and the skin or flap colour **is** pale, dusky or darkened.

# STAR Classification System <sup>1, 4</sup>

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## **STAR Category 3**

A skin tear where the skin flap is completely absent.

# ISTAP Skin Tear Classification System <sup>2</sup>

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**Type 1**  
No skin loss



**Type 2**  
Partial flap loss



**Type 3**  
Total flap loss

# Documentation

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- document interventions and skin tear classification in clinical notes
- complete a wound care plan
- complete an incident form as per your workplace/facility policy
- a skin tear is an injury, complete an ACC form ACC46



**\*Wound Bed Preparation** <https://www.nzwcs.org.nz/resources/publications/202-wound-bed-preparation>

# Dressing Products

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**Recommended:** 2, 5, 6

- non adherent mesh dressings
- foam dressings – adhesives or non adhesive
- hydrogels
- calcium alginates
- gelling fibres
- acrylic dressings
- skin glue



**Diagram depicting the skin tear size, and arrow to show the direction the dressing should be removed**

# Dressing Products

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## Not recommended:

- Iodine based dressings <sup>2</sup>
- Strong adhesives that can cause more skin trauma such as films and hydrocolloids <sup>2</sup>
- **Adhesive closure strips - expert opinion suggests these are no longer a preferred treatment option for skin tears as they can increase the risk of skin trauma on removal <sup>2</sup>**
- If adhesive closure strips are used – use minimally on full thickness flaps, and secure skin-to-skin (not skin-wound-skin), and allow gaps for wound exudate <sup>2</sup>
- Avoid staples and suturing on older persons skin <sup>2, 3, 5, 6</sup>

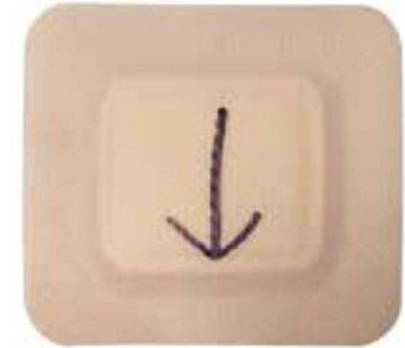


# Dressing Tips <sup>2, 3, 5, 6</sup>

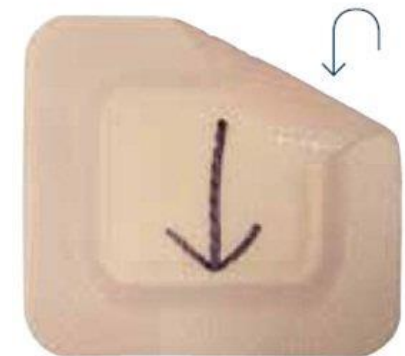
- The absorbent pad must be larger than the wound to absorb exudate
- Draw an arrow to indicate direction of removal to avoid lifting the skin flap, causing additional trauma
- Use a skin barrier to protect intact skin from adhesives
- Remove dressing low and slow using an adhesive remover wipe



Skin tear



Arrow to indicate direction of dressing removal



Remove in the direction of the arrow

# Dressings Tips continued 2, 3, 5, 6

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- Dressings on non-complex small skin tears can be left for up to 7-days but more complex tears should be checked sooner
- Match the dressing product to the characteristics of the wound ie tissue type, exudate levels
- To reduce skin swelling, facilitate haemostasis and for ongoing protection, apply a tubular bandage to the affected limb – check arterial status if on lower limbs





# Summary:

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## Prevention is the principle goal

- implement a skin care regime
- be aware and manage risk factors
- education: register free to obtain the skin tear patient information sheet from NZ Doctor <https://nzdoctor.co.nz/everybody-patient-sheets>
- for support and information join the New Zealand Wound Care Society

## Use a validated skin tear classification tool

- STAR or ISTAP
- documentation and reporting

## Treatment management

- utilise recommended dressings and dressing tips
- avoid adhesive closure strips

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1. Carville, K., Lewin, G., Newall, N., Haselhurst, P., Michael, R., Santamaria, N., & Roberts, P. (2007). STAR: a consensus for skin tear classification. *Primary Intention*, 15(1), 18-28.
  2. LeBlanc K et al. Best practice recommendations for the prevention and management of skin tears in aged skin. *Wounds International* 2018. Available from [www.woundsinternational.com](http://www.woundsinternational.com)
  3. Beckman, D. et al. (2020) *Best practice recommendations for holistic strategies to promote and maintain skin integrity*. Wounds International. Available from [www.woundsinternational.com](http://www.woundsinternational.com)
  4. Stephen-Haynes, J., & Carville, K. Skin tears made easy. *Wounds International* . 2011: 2(4): Available from <http://www.woundsinternational.com>
  5. Brown, A. (2019). Skin Tears: prevention and management in the elderly. *Journal of Community Nursing*.33(1), 22-28.
  6. Idensohm, P., Beeckman, D., de Gouveia Santos, et al (2019). Ten top tips: skin tears. *Wounds International*. (10)2, 10-14.





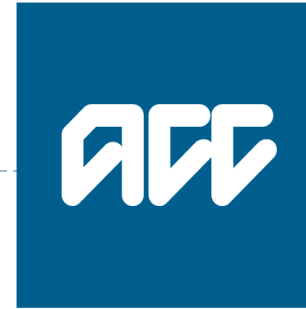
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# Thank you for your attendance

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