Skin Tear Management Flow Chart

Assessment

- All clients should have a risk assessment for skin tears on admission
- Assess and document skin tears using a recognised assessment and classification system e.g. STAR[1]
- Assess the surrounding skin for swelling, discolouration or bruising

If skin flap is pale, dusky or darkened:

- Reassess in 24-48 hours or at the first dressing change

* *Assessment should only be undertaken by trained staff*

[1] Carville et al. 2007

Management

- Control bleeding
- Cleanse the wound gently with warm water or normal saline, pat dry
- Realign edges if possible
  - do not stretch the skin
  - use a moist cotton-tip to roll skin into place
- Apply a low adherent, soft-silicone dressing to wound, overlapping the wound by at least 2 cm
- Draw arrows on the dressing to indicate the direction of dressing removal
- Mark the date on the dressing
- Apply limb protector

Prevention

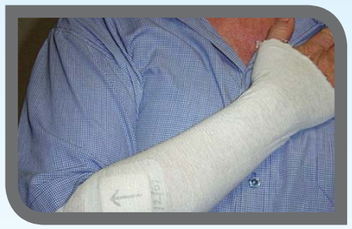
- Assess skin regularly and implement a prevention protocol for those at risk
- Use soap-free bathing products
- Apply moisturiser twice daily
- Use correct lifting and positioning techniques
- Avoid wearing rings that may snag the skin
- When repositioning use assistive devices such as slide sheets
- Protect fragile skin with either limb protectors or long sleeves or pants
- Pad or cushion equipment and furniture
- Avoid using tapes or adhesives, use tubular retention bandages to secure dressings

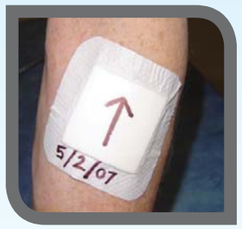
Document

- Level of risk and risk factors present
- Prevention strategies
- Management strategies
- Category of skin tear/s, size, location, tissue type, exudate, surrounding skin
- Progress and outcome of interventions

Risk factors for a Skin Tear

- History of previous skin tears
- Bruising, discoloured, thin or fragile skin
- Cognitive impairment / dementia
- Impaired sensory perception
- Dependency
- Multiple or high risk medications e.g. steroids, anticoagulants
- Impaired mobility
- Poor nutritional status
- Dry skin / dehydration
- Presence of friction, shearing and/or pressure





References:

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promoting healthy skin

Champions for Skin Integrity

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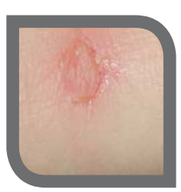
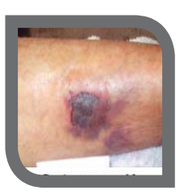
CRICOS No. 00213J

STAR classification system



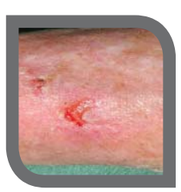
Category 1a

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.



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.

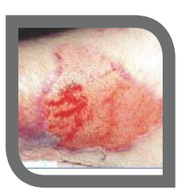


Category 2a

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

Category 2b

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



Category 3

A skin tear where the skin flap is completely absent.

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