

LIVE

WEDNESDAY 15TH FEBRUARY, 7:30PM

Best Practice in Skin Tear Management

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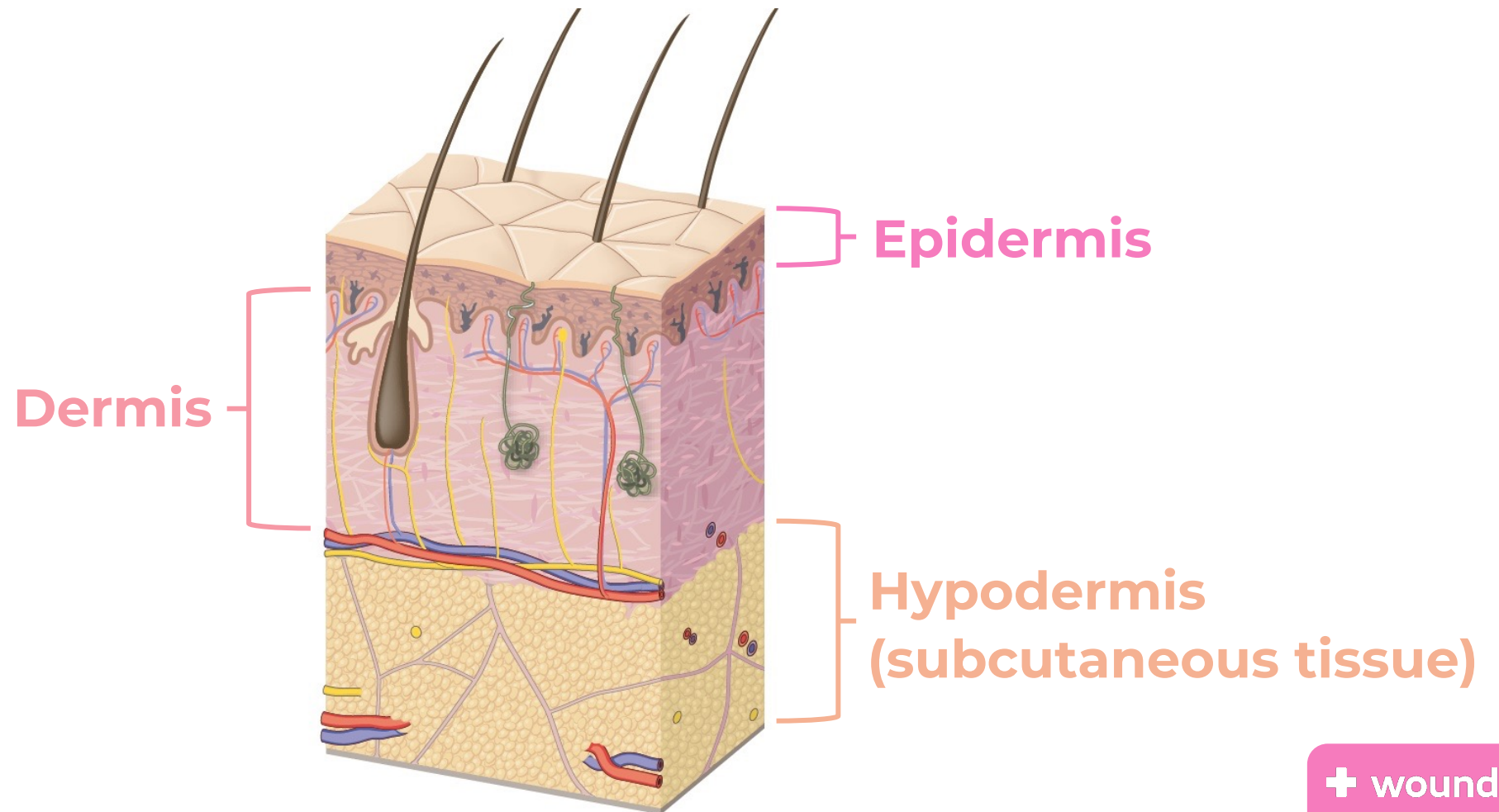
LIVE Q&A

*SEND IN YOUR QUESTIONS BY COMMENTING
ON THE VIDEO*

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

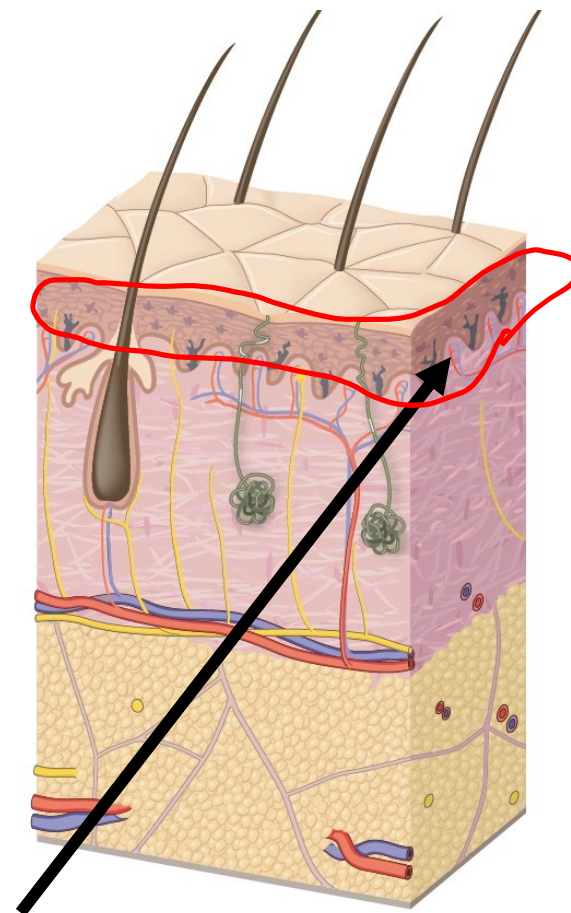
-  Skin anatomy — refresher
-  Changes in aging skin
-  What is a skin tear
-  Risk factors for skin tear development
-  Prevention of skin tears
-  Classifying skin tears and assessment
-  Management and treatment of skin tears

SKIN LAYERS¹



AGING SKIN

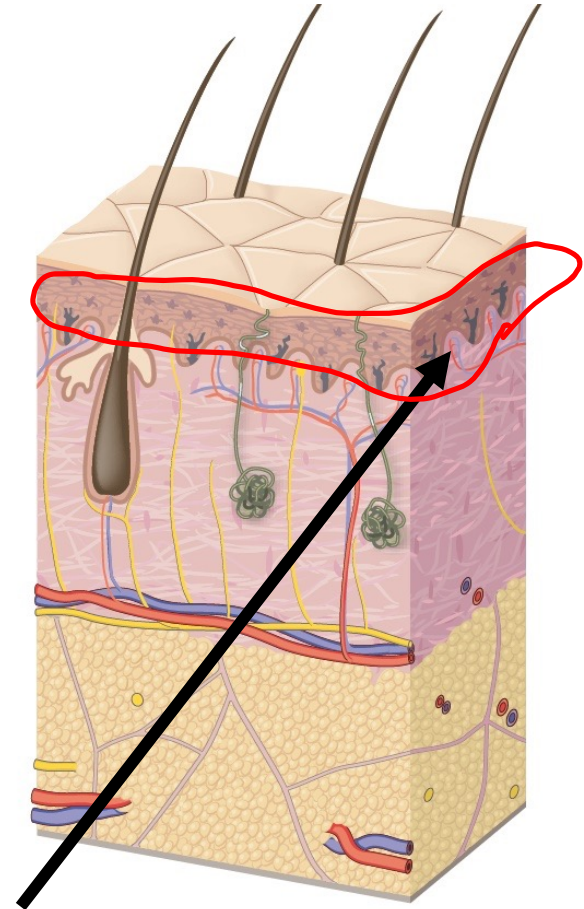
- Thinning of the epidermis and flattening of the epidermal junction ²
- Loss of collagen, elastin and glycosaminoglycans (used in the body as a lubricant or shock absorber) ²
- Atrophy and contraction of the dermis (causing appearance of wrinkles and folds) ²
- Decreased activity of sweat glands and sebaceous glands, causing the skin to dry out ²



Rete ridges
(epidermal junction)

AGING SKIN

- Thinning of blood vessel walls and a reduction of blood supply to the extremities²
- Photoaging²



Rete ridges
(epidermal junction)

WHAT IS A SKIN TEARS?

The International Skin Tear Advisory Panel (ISTAP) defines a skin tear as:

A traumatic wound caused by mechanical forces, including removal of adhesives.

Severity may vary by depth (not extending through the subcutaneous layer)².

WHAT IS A SKIN TEARS?

Skin tears are acute wounds with a high propensity to develop into chronic wounds and impose health burdens on individuals and care agencies².

Although skin tears are frequently precipitated by trauma, they are often slow to heal and may become chronic wounds because of co-existing conditions².



HOW BIG A PROBLEM ARE SKIN TEARS?



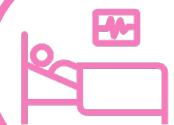
Skin tears occur across varied patient groups; people with **aged and fragile skin are at an increased risk** of skin tears — aging of the worldwide population means that incidence is increasing².



They can be painful wounds, **affecting quality of life** and **causing distress** to the individual².



Skin tears result in **increased community visits**².



Skin tears may **increase the likelihood of hospitalisation** and **prolong hospitalisation stay**².

PLASTICS & PRE-TIBIAL HAEMATOMAS

83.3

Years of age
(47–96)

77.8%

American Society of
Anaesthesiologists
(ASA) Score³
(Mohamed, 2011)

42.1%

Cancelled
once

30%

Theatre
delayed by
3–9 days

68.2%

Female

17.7%

Mortality

21.1%

Cancelled
more than
once

10 DAYS

Length
of stay (LOS)
6–21 days

WHAT'S THE SIZE OF THE PROBLEM?



- **In long-term care:** 2.23–92%, although estimates vary and may be lower²
- **In the community:** 4.5–19.5% in all age groups²
- **In acute care:** 6.2–11.1%²
- **In palliative care:** 3.3–14.3%²
- **In intensive care and operative theatres:** prevalence is unknown².

INTRINSIC RISK FACTORS

Intrinsic risk factors²:

- Co-morbidities
- Immobility
- Female sex
- Visual Impairment
- Extremes of age
- Frailty
- Incontinence/MASD
- Limb stiffness and spasticity
- Cognitive impairment
- Neuropathy
- Altered sensory status
- Presence of ecchymosis



EXTRINSIC RISK FACTORS

Extrinsic risk factors²:

- Inadequate nutritional intake
- Transfer and falls
- Prosthetic devices
- Skin cleansers
- Blood draws
- Removal of tape or dressings
- Application and removal of stockings
- Using assistive devices
- Polypharmacy



FRAILTY

The Rockwood Clinical Frailty Score Guidance

Very Fit: 1-4

Red flags to monitor for:

- Unexpected weight loss
- Poor nutrition and hydration
- Fatigue
- Weakness
- Slowing down
- Deteriorating cognition



Mildly Frail: 5

Actions:

- Keeping as active as possible
- Refer to Community Navigator
- Consider getting involved in a volunteer scheme
- Active Ageing advice and guidance (Age UK)
- Yearly medication/long term condition review
- Falls screen
- Assess for loneliness
- Cognitive screening
- Dietary advice
- Sight and hearing checks



Moderately Frail: 6

Actions (in addition to those for mildly frail):

- Consider for case management
- Assessment for care needs
- MDT discussions
- Think about Advance Care Planning e.g. making a will, Lasting Power of Attorney, Advanced Decisions to Refuse Treatment, Treatment Escalation Planning and informing others of wishes



Severely Frail: 7-9

Actions (in addition to those for moderately frail):

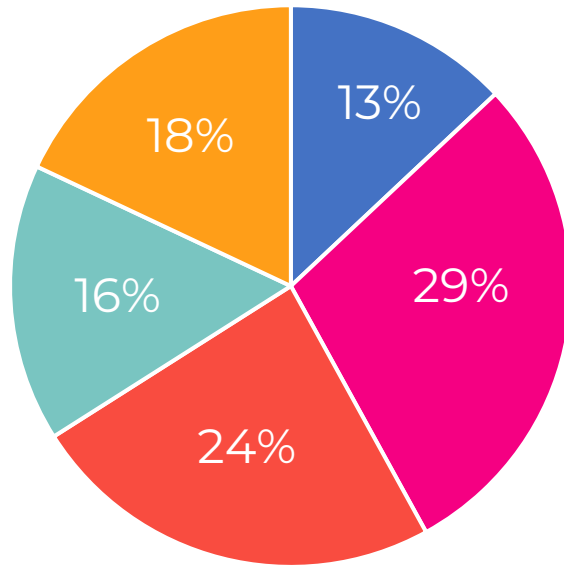
- Comprehensive Geriatric Assessment
- Ensure appropriate care package in place
- Consider Gold Standards Framework register
- Recognise possibility of last year of life and advance care plan accordingly
- DE-prescribe
- Follow local End of Life Pathway



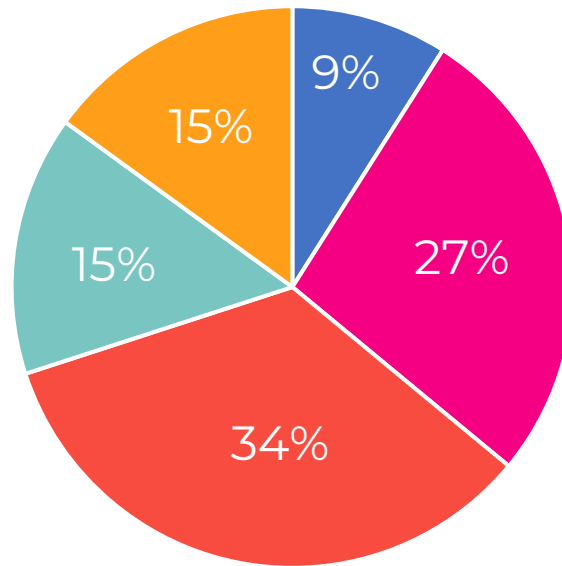
*No decision about me
without me*

HERTS & WEST ICB LOWER LIMB NEEDS ASSESSMENT

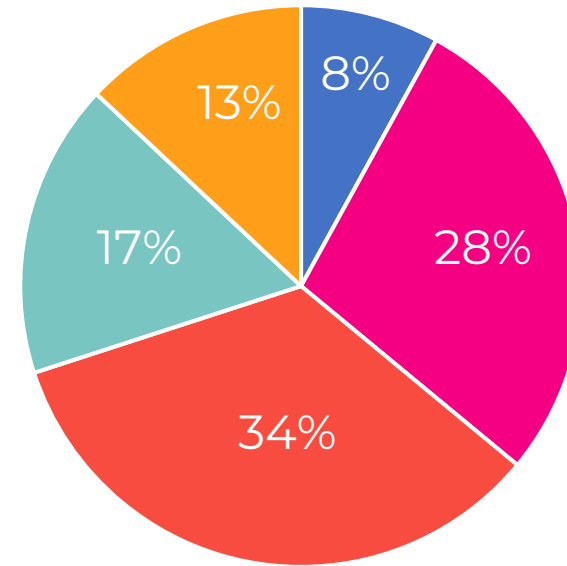
LU Frailty Score



Lymph Frailty Score



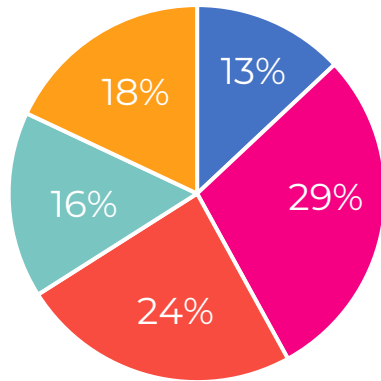
Cellulitis Frailty Score



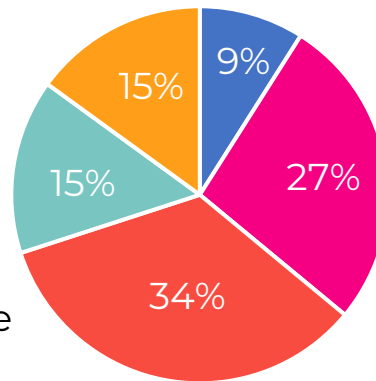
• Not Recorded • Mild • Moderate • Severe • Fit

HERTS & WEST ICB LOWER LIMB NEEDS ASSESSMENT

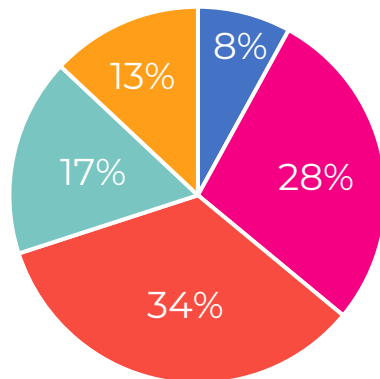
LU frailty score



Lymph frailty score



Cellulitis frailty score



- Not recorded
- Mild
- Moderate
- Severe
- Fit

- **83%** had one or more long-term conditions managed in secondary care⁴
- **14%** had moderate frailty and **9%** had severe frailty⁴
- **33%** receiving social care⁴
- **43.4%** had three or more long-term conditions managed in secondary care⁴.

WHAT CAUSES SKIN TEARS?

- 1 Equipment injuries (wheelchair/bed-rails)²
- 2 Blunt trauma²
- 3 Moving and handling²



WHAT CAUSES SKIN TEARS?

4

Falls²

5

Dressing/tape removal²

6

Activities of daily living (ADLs)²



IDENTIFYING RISK: BEST PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS²

Skin Tear Risk Assessment (patient, wound, environment)

Risk Categories

- **Skin:** extremes of age, dry/fragile skin, previous skin tear
- **Mobility:** history of fall, impaired mobility, dependence on assistance for activities of daily living, mechanical trauma
- **General health:** comorbidities, polypharmacy, impaired cognition (sensory, visual, auditory) and malnutrition

At Risk
If patient has **any**
identified risk factors

No

Reassess when patient's
condition changes

Yes

Implement risk reduction programme checklist
(see Table 1)

RISK REDUCTION: BEST PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS⁵

Table 1: Risk Reduction programme checklist (adapted from LeBlanc and Baranoski, 2011)

Risk Factor	Action
Skin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Inspect skin and investigate previous history of skin tears<input type="checkbox"/> If patient has dry, fragile, vulnerable skin, assess risk of accidental trauma<input type="checkbox"/> Manage dry skin and use emollient to rehydrate limbs as required<input type="checkbox"/> Implement an individualised skin care plan using a skin-friendly cleanser (not traditional soap) and warm (not hot) water<input type="checkbox"/> Prevent skin trauma from adhesives, dressings and tapes (use silicone tape and cohesive retention bandages)<input type="checkbox"/> Consider medications that may directly affect skin (e.g. topical and systemic steroids)<input type="checkbox"/> Be aware of increased risk due to extremes of age<input type="checkbox"/> Discuss use of protective clothing (e.g. shin guards, long sleeves or retention bandages)<input type="checkbox"/> Avoid sharp fingernails or jewellery in patient contact
Mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Encourage active involvement/exercises if physical function is impaired<input type="checkbox"/> Avoid friction and shearing (e.g. use glide sheets, hoists), using good manual handling techniques as per local guidelines<input type="checkbox"/> Conduct falls risk assessment<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that sensible/comfortable shoes are worn<input type="checkbox"/> Apply clothing and compression garments carefully<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure a safe environment – adequate lighting, removing obstacles<input type="checkbox"/> Use padding for equipment (as per local policy) and furniture<input type="checkbox"/> Assess potential skin damage from pets
General Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Educate patient and carers on skin tear risk and prevention<input type="checkbox"/> Actively involve the patient/carer in care decisions where appropriate<input type="checkbox"/> Optimise nutrition and hydration, referring to dietician if necessary<input type="checkbox"/> Refer to appropriate specialist if impaired sensory perception is problematic (e.g. diabetes)<input type="checkbox"/> Consider possible effects of medications and polypharmacy on the patient's skin

RISK REDUCTION: BEST PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS²

Risk Factors:



Skin



Mobility



General Health

MOISTURISE DRY SKIN

PREVENT TRAUMA FROM ADHESIVES

AVOID SHARP NAILS AND JEWELLERY

ENVIRONMENT

REDUCE FALLS RISK

OPTIMISE

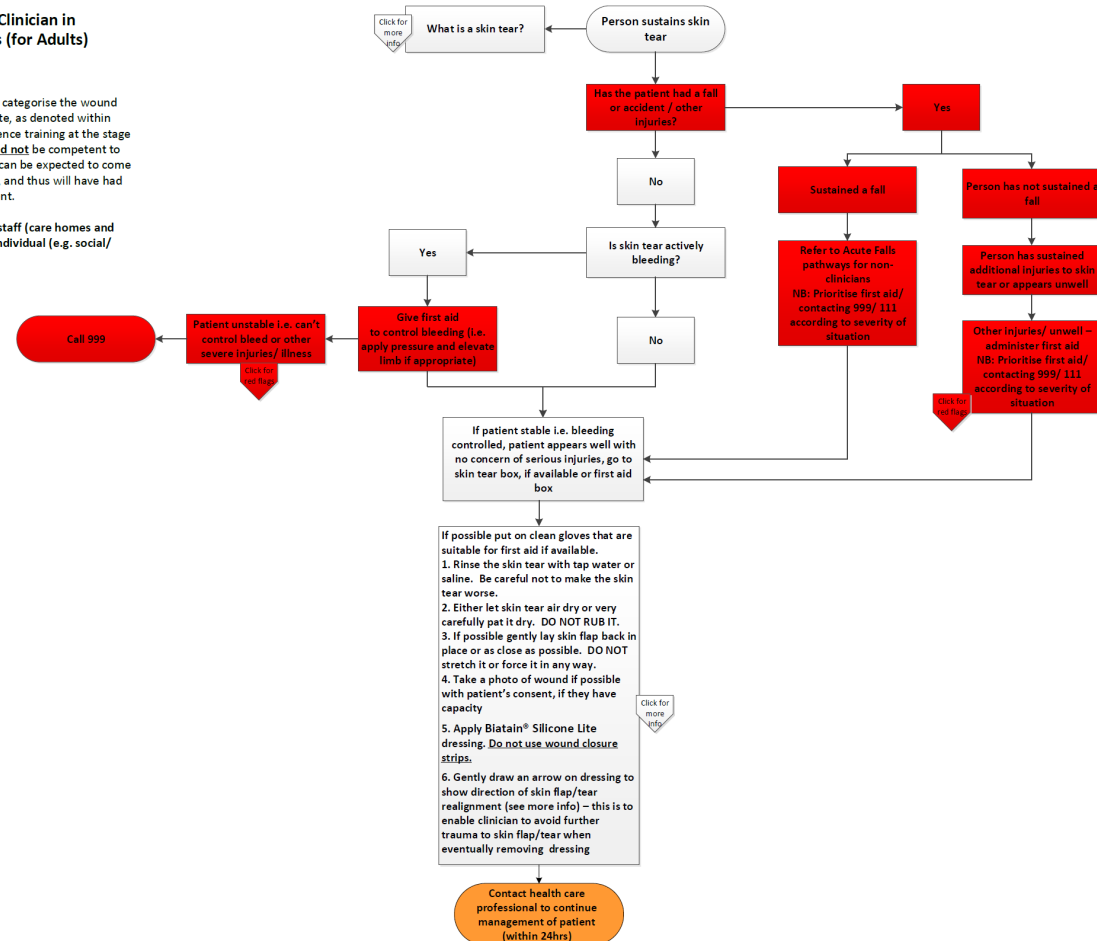
PATHWAYS

Acute Management by Non-Clinician in the Community of Skin Tears (for Adults)

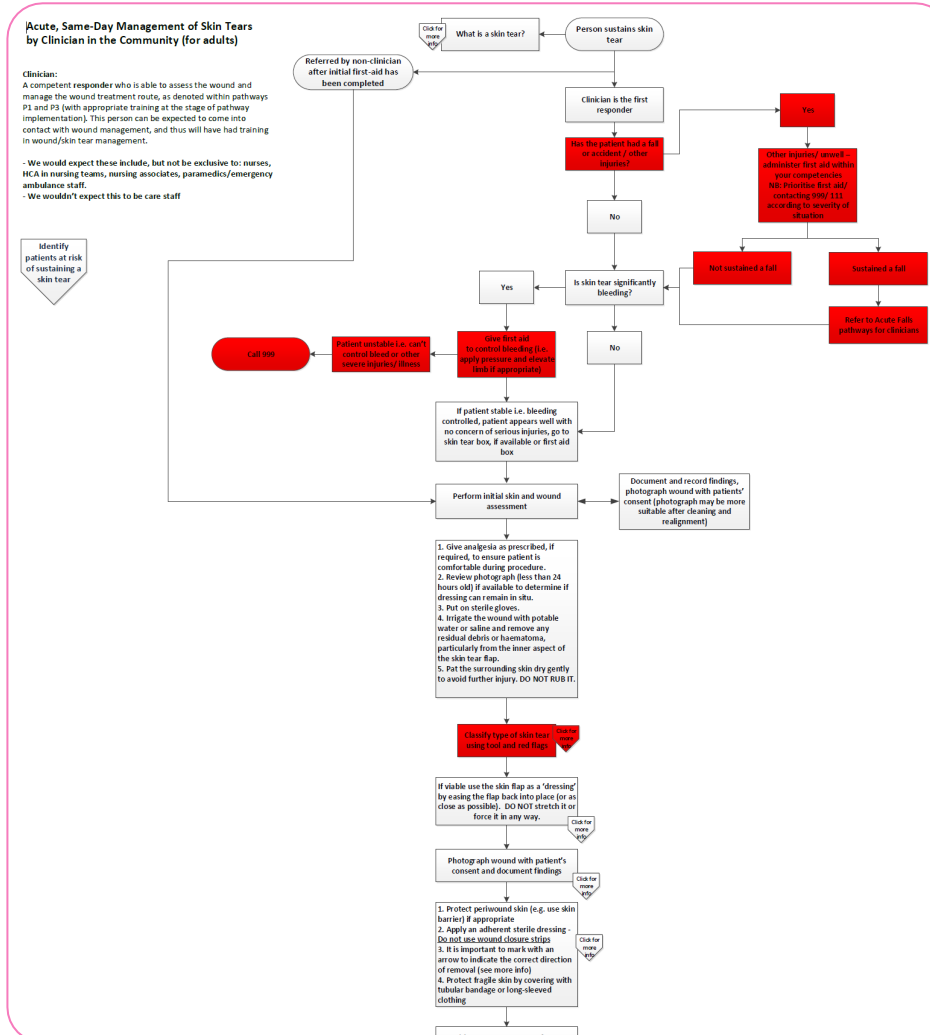
Non-clinician:
A competent responder who is able to categorise the wound and manage the wound treatment route, as denoted within pathway P2 (with appropriate competence training at the stage of pathway implementation), but would not be competent to follow pathways P1 or P3. This person can be expected to come into contact with wound management, and thus will have had training in wound/skin tear management.

We would expect this to include care staff (care homes and home care) and any other identified individual (e.g. social/health care therapist).

[Click for prevention of skin tears](#)

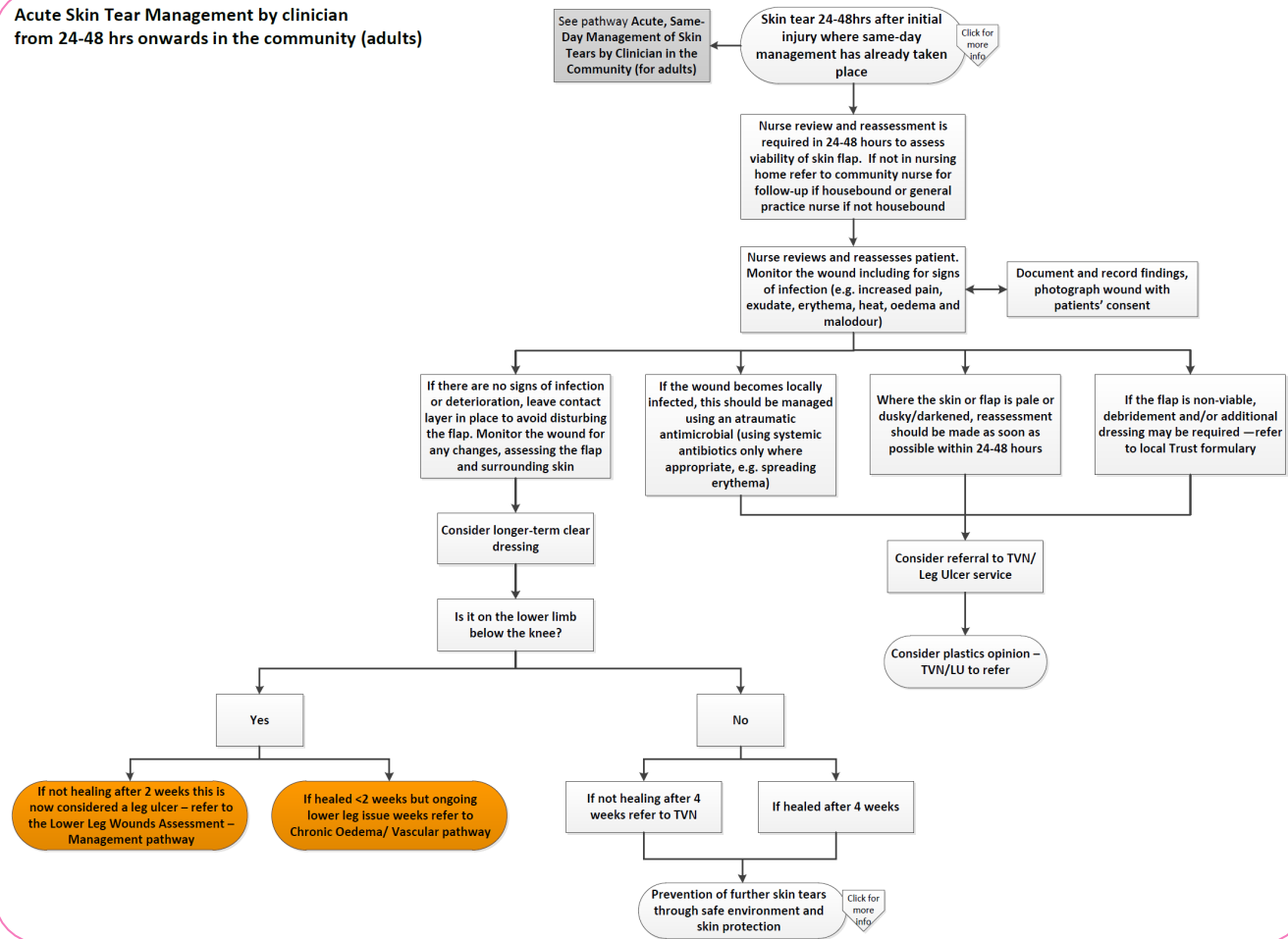


PATHWAYS



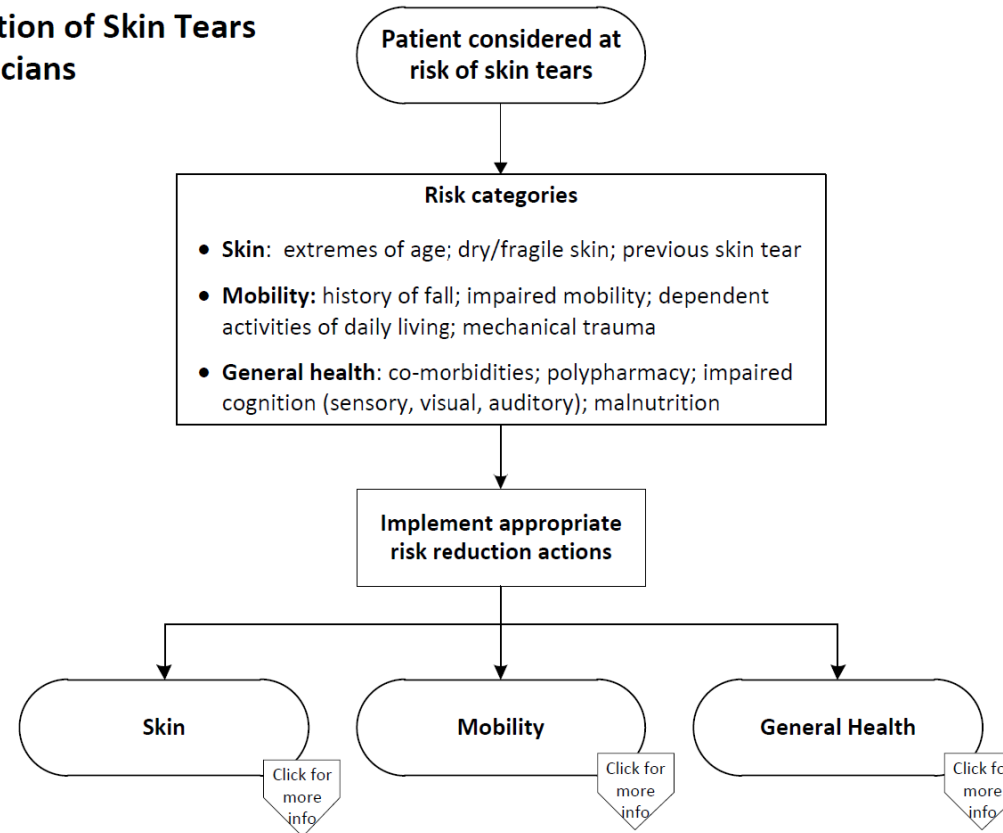
PATHWAYS

Acute Skin Tear Management by clinician from 24-48 hrs onwards in the community (adults)

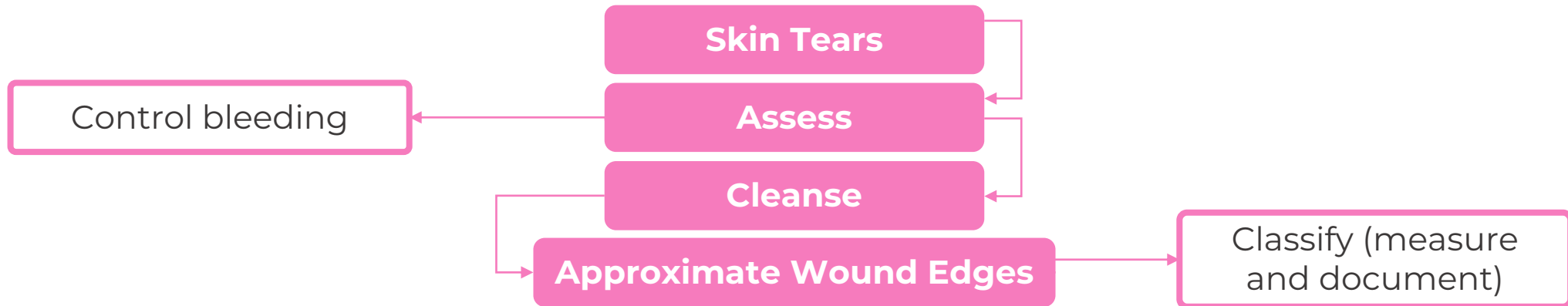


PATHWAYS

Prevention of Skin Tears by Clinicians



ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT²



Goals of treatment

- Treat the cause
- Implement prevention
- Protocol
- Moist wound healing
- Avoid trauma
- Protect periwound skin
- Manage exudate
- Avoid infection
- Pain control

Treatment options in accordance with local wound conditions



Type 1: No skin loss



Type 2: Partial flap loss

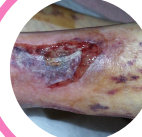


Type 3: Total flap loss

ASSESSMENT AND CLASSIFICATION



The initial assessment should include a comprehensive assessment of the person and their wound. This includes determining all causative factors, any underlying comorbidities, nutritional status, assessing level of pain, and potential for wound healing^{2,6}



Classification of the injury^{2,6}



Photograph of the injury^{2,6}

T.I.M.E.⁷⁻⁸

Wound assessment (where relevant)^{2,6}.

ASSESSMENT²

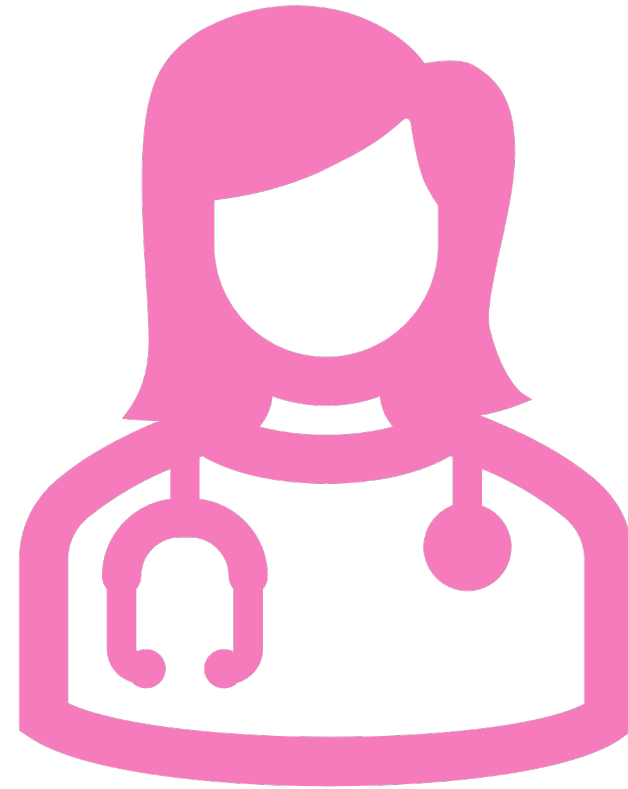
Control bleeding

Assess

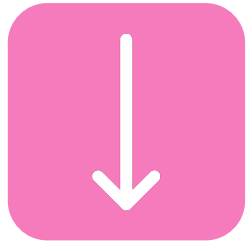
Do I need to escalate?

- Fall?
- Conscious and breathing?
- Other injuries?
- Skin, bone, head
- Other skin injuries
- Consider all skin, not just the visible injury
- Bleeding
- More than one site?
- Consider medication and underlying conditions
- Can it be controlled?

ESCALATION



CONTROL BLEEDING²



Apply pressure²



Elevate the limb if possible²



First aid²

CLEANSE AND DEBRIDE



Cleanse and irrigate²



Remove debris and/or haematoma²

CLASSIFICATION



Skin Tear Classification

Type 1: No Skin Loss

Type 2: Partial Flap Loss

Type 3: Total Flap Loss



Linear or Flap* Tear which can be repositioned to cover the wound bed

Partial Flap Loss which cannot be repositioned to cover the wound bed

Total Flap Loss exposing entire wound bed

**A flap in skin tears is defined as a portion of the skin (epidermis/dermis) that is unintentionally separated from its original place due to shear, friction, and/or blunt force. This concept is not to be confused with tissue that is intentionally detached from its place of origin for therapeutic use e.g. surgical skin grafting.*

APPROXIMATE AND CLASSIFY



- Flap rolled out to reposition over wound
- Does not fully cover the wound bed
- Type 2: partial flap loss

APPLY DRESSING

*Remove dressing over
the skin flap in the
same direction*



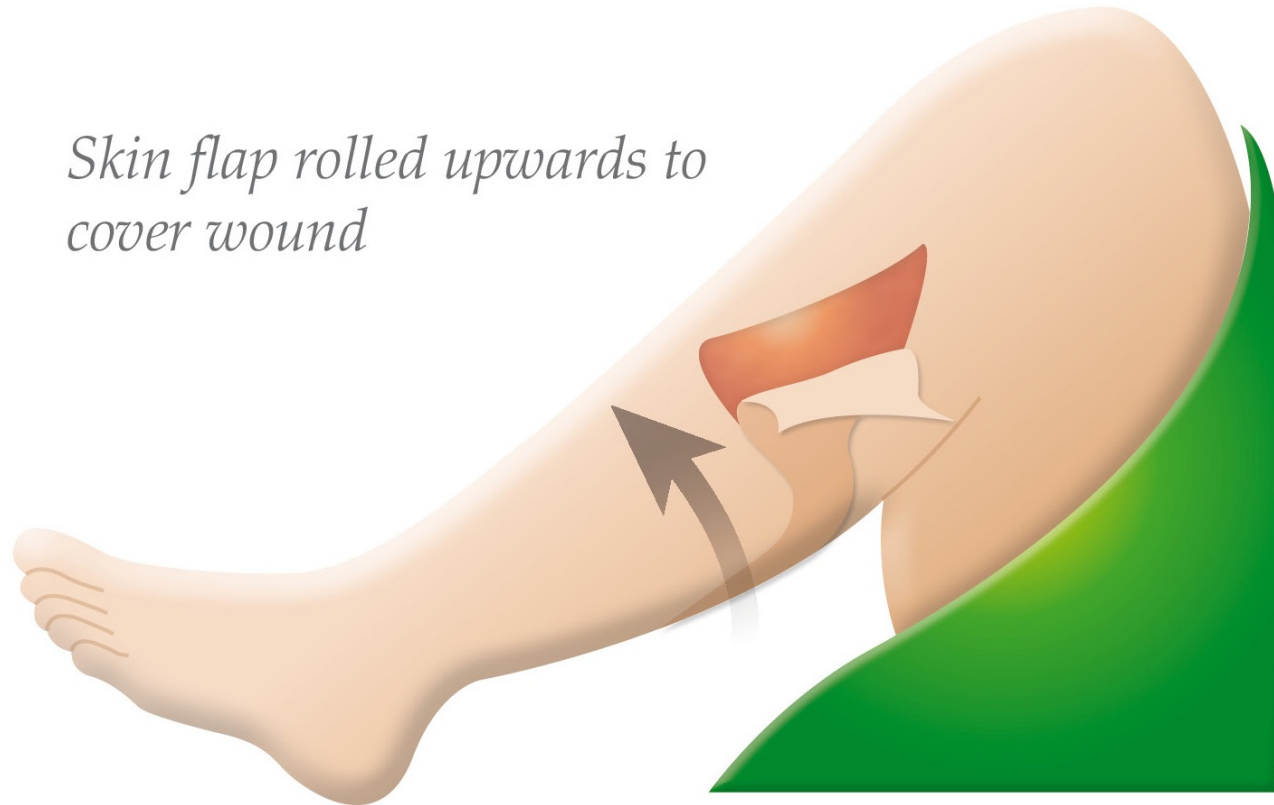
APPLY DRESSING

*Arrow on dressing indicates
correct direction for removal*



APPLY DRESSING

Skin flap rolled upwards to cover wound





Lower Limb - recommendations for care

For further information, please refer to the full NWCS Lower Limb Recommendations at NationalWoundCareStrategy.net



Immediate and Necessary Care

For people with one or more wounds below the knee.

Leg wound - originating on or above the malleolus (ankle bone) but below the knee.

Foot wound - originating below the malleolus.



RED FLAGS

- Acute infection of leg or foot (e.g. increasing unilateral redness, swelling, pain, pus, heat).
- Symptoms of sepsis.
- Acute or chronic limb threatening ischaemia.
- Suspected deep vein thrombosis (DVT).
- Suspected skin cancer.

- Treat infection.
- Immediately escalate.
- For people in the last few weeks of life, seek input from their other clinicians.

Immediate care

- Cleaning and emollient.
- Simple low-adherent dressing.
- Leg wounds, first line mild graduated compression.
- Supported self-care (when appropriate).

Assessment times for diagnosis and treatment

- In hospital with diabetic foot wound - refer to MDT **within 24 hours**.
- Any other type of foot wound - refer to MDT **within 1 working day**.
- Leg wounds - **assess within 14 days**.

Wounds on the Foot

One or more wounds below the malleolus

Diagnosis and treatment

1 Assess and identify contributing causes for non-healing

2. Diagnose cause of non-healing and formulate treatment plan

People with confirmed or suspected diabetic foot ulceration

- Refer to diabetic foot team.
- Provide care in line the NICE Guideline for Diabetic Foot Problems.

People with confirmed or suspected peripheral arterial disease

- Refer for vascular surgical opinion.
- Provide care in line the NICE Guideline for Peripheral Arterial Disease.

Ongoing care and review

Review at each dressing change and at weekly intervals

- Monitor healing at **4-week intervals** (or more frequently if concerned).
- If unhealed at **12 weeks**, reassess.

Wounds on the Leg

One or more wounds above the malleolus

Diagnosis and treatment

1 Assess and identify contributing causes for non-healing

2. Diagnose cause of non-healing and formulate treatment plan

Leg wounds with an adequate arterial supply and no aetiology other than venous insufficiency

- Refer for venous surgical / endovenous interventions.
- Strong compression therapy.

Leg wounds with signs of arterial disease

- Refer for vascular surgical/endovenous interventions and advice on compression.
- Pending vascular opinion, if no symptoms of arterial insufficiency, continue with mild graduated compression.

Leg wounds of other or uncertain aetiology

- Refer for dermatology opinion (or other specialist depending on symptoms and service arrangements).
- Pending specialist opinion if no symptoms of arterial insufficiency, continue with mild graduated compression.

Lymphoedema

- Refer for expert diagnosis and advice about lymphoedema.

Ongoing care and review

Review at each dressing change and weekly intervals

Monitor healing at 4-week intervals (or more frequently if concerned)

- If deteriorating or no significant progress towards healing, escalate.

If unhealed at 12 weeks, reassess

- If progressing to healing but still unhealed, undertake comprehensive re-assessment.
- If deteriorating or no significant progress towards healing, escalate.

Following healing

Venous Leg Ulceration

- Compression hosiery.
- 6-monthly review for replacement of compression garments and ongoing advice.
- If changes in lower limb symptoms or skin problems relating to hosiery, undertake comprehensive re-assessment.

PATHWAYS AND MANAGEMENT

Smith+Nephew

Management of skin tears¹

Control bleeding

Skin tears

Assess

Cleanse

Approximate wound edges

Classify (measure and document)

Goals of treatment

Treat the cause	Moist wound healing	Manage exudate
Implement prevention Protocol	Avoid trauma	Avoid infection
	Protect peri-wound skin	Pain control

Treatment options in accordance with local wound conditions

Type 1: No skin loss

Type 2: Partial flap loss

Type 3: Total flap loss

Select appropriate dressing in accordance with wound conditions, and apply. In direction of skin flap, draw an arrow on top of the dressing to aid removal.

Product solution

ALLEVYN® Gentle Border Foam Dressing

Smith & Nephew, Crowley Park, Building 5, Hatters Lane, Watford, Hertfordshire WD18 8YE. T +44 (0)1923 477100, F +44 (0)1923 477101 www.smith-nephew.com/uk *Trademark of Smith & Nephew. All Trademarks acknowledged. ©May 2020 Smith+Nephew 25200

References: 1. LeBlanc K et al. Best practice recommendations for the prevention and management of skin tears in aged skin. Wounds International 2018. Available to download from www.woundsinternational.com. Smith+Nephew does not provide medical advice. The information presented is not, and is not intended to serve as, medical advice. For detailed product information, including indications for use, contraindications, precautions and warnings, please consult the product's applicable instructions for Use (IFU) prior to use.

NHS
East of England
Ambulance Service
NHS Trust

SKIN TEAR PATHWAY

Classification System

No Skin Loss

A Type 1 skin tear is where a linear tear can be repositioned to cover the wound bed.

Partial Flap Loss

A Type 2 skin tear has partial flap loss – the flap does not cover the entire wound bed when repositioned.

Total Flap Loss

A Type 3 skin tear has total flap loss leaving the wound bed exposed.

TREATMENT PLAN FOR SKIN TEARS

Stop Bleeding

Gently clean and dry using sterile gauze and saline

Approximate wound edges if possible, measure and classify

Apply adhesive bordered silicone wound contact layer ensuring wound bed is completely covered

Document findings and clinical management plan

Provide patient with after-care instructions and worsening advice

Complete follow up referral

Main Goals of Treatment

- TREAT THE CAUSE
- PROMOTE MOIST WOUND HEALING
- AVOID TRAUMA
- PROTECT PERIWOUND SKIN
- MANAGE EXUDATE
- AVOID INFECTION
- PAIN CONTROL

Steri-strips are no longer a preferred treatment option of choice for skin tears (ISTAP, 2019).

RED FLAGS

EXCESS DEPTH / UNCONTROLLABLE BLEEDING
BONE OR TENDON INJURY SUSPECTED

References:
International Skin Tear Advisory Panel (ISTAP) 2019 www.istap.org.au
Wounds UK (2019) www.wounds-uk.com

AFTERCARE



- Flap rolled out to reposition over wound
- Does not fully cover the wound bed
- Type 2: partial flap loss

AFTERCARE



- Two weeks dressing in place
- Small open area left to heal

AFTERCARE

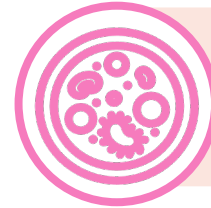


- Skin Care

NOT RESPONDING TO TREATMENT



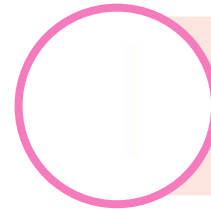
If on the lower leg has compression been considered?



Infection and biofilm



Full holistic wound assessment considering factors delaying healing^{6, 7}



Nutrition

PREVENT ANOTHER²

Risk factors:



Skin



Mobility



General Health

MOISTURISE DRY SKIN

PREVENT TRAUMA FROM ADHESIVES

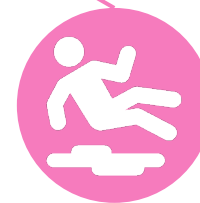
AVOID SHARP NAILS AND JEWELLERY

ENVIRONMENT

REDUCE FALLS RISK

OPTIMISE

MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM



MANAGEMENT AND TREATMENT OF SKIN TEARS

- Skin tears are **acute wounds** that have the potential to be closed by **primary intention**
- Traditionally, wounds closed by primary intention are secured with sutures, staples or adhesive strips; however, given the **fragility of aged skin** and that skin tears are **generally not deep**, these are **not viable options**
- The use of adhesive strips is **no longer recommended**².

SUITABLE DRESSINGS FOR SKIN TEARS

When skin tears occur, it is vital that the wound care products chosen will optimise wound healing and not increase the risk of further skin damage.

The **ideal dressing** for managing skin tears should:

- Control bleeding
- Be easy to apply and remove
- Not cause trauma on removal
- Provide a protective anti-shear barrier
- Be flexible and mould to contours
- Provide secure, but not aggressive, retention
- Afford extended wear time
- Be cost-effective

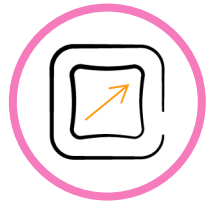
SUITABLE DRESSINGS FOR SKIN TEARS

If possible, leave the dressing in place for **several days** to avoid disturbing the skin flap.

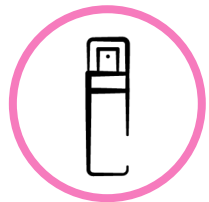
The skin flap should not be disturbed for at least five days to allow for **adherence to the cellular structures below**¹³.



TIPS IN PRACTICE



Mark the dressing with an **arrow to indicate the correct direction of removal** and make sure that this is clearly explained in the notes.



Adhesive removers can be used when removing the dressing to minimise trauma.

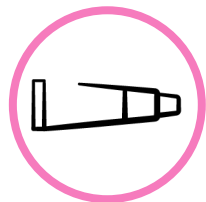


Take time to **remove dressings slowly**.

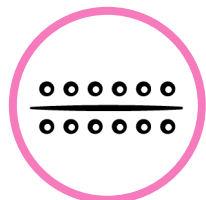
TIPS IN PRACTICE



Consider using a **skin barrier product** to protect the surrounding skin (e.g. to prevent maceration if the wound has a high exudate volume).

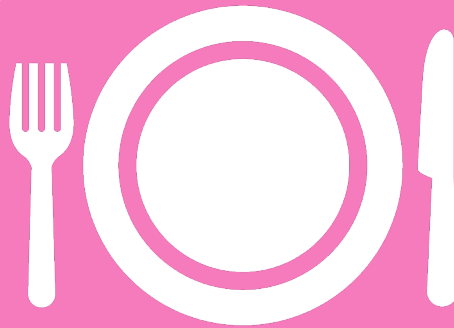
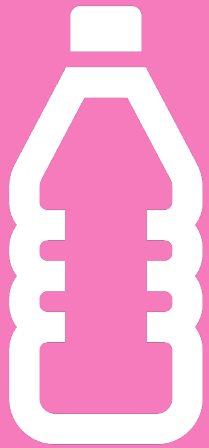


Use an emollient to soften and smooth wider skin area and prevent further tears.



Continue to **monitor the wound for changes or signs of infection**; if there is no improvement (e.g. after four assessments), or the wound deteriorates, refer to appropriate specialist as per local protocol.

LET'S START NOW...



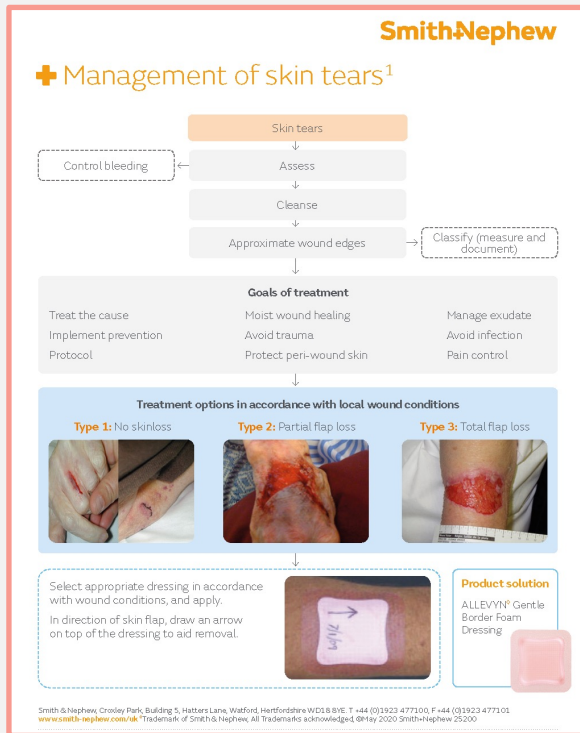
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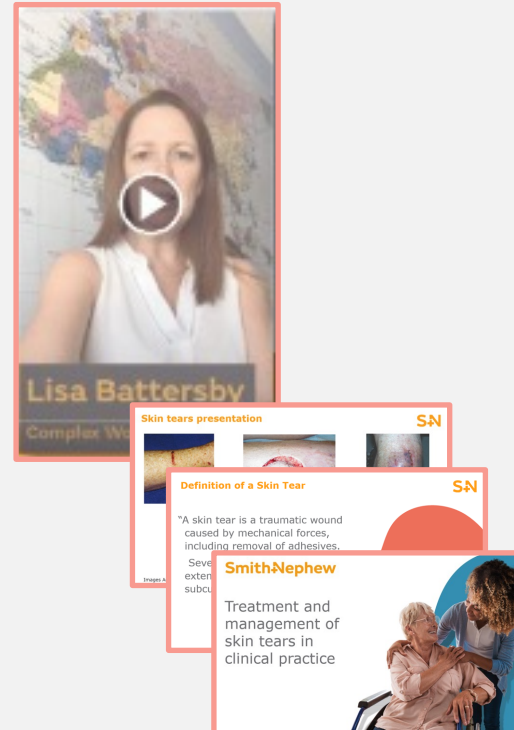
RESOURCES

SUPPORT FROM Smith+Nephew

Pathway



Training Materials



Skin Tear Box



Audits

Smith+Nephew

Skin Tear Pre Audit (Nursing Home)

Name of your Team/Nursing Home/Locality: _____

How do you describe your role?
 Home Manager Senior Carer Carer

Where are you based?
 Home Hospital

How often do you have to deal with Skin Tears?
 Occasionally Frequently Never

How confident are you in managing Skin Tears?
 Not confident Quite confident Very confident

Do you have to refer the patient to a community nurse for management of skin tears?
 Yes No

Approximately how long (days) do you have to wait for a nurse to assess skin tears and apply the appropriate dressing?
 1-2 days 3-5 days 6-10 days More than 10 days

Could you prevent a referral to the community nursing team if you had appropriate training and availability of dressings to effectively manage skin tears?
 Yes No

Has the home been offered or been involved with recent skin tear training?
 Yes No

SUPPORT FROM Smith+Nephew

ALLEVYN Gentle Border webpage



Questions



RESOURCES

The logo for Smith+Nephew, featuring the letters 'S' and 'N' in a bold, orange font with a white plus sign between them.

Smith+Nephew
website

The logo for Wound Club Online, featuring a green plus sign, the word 'woundclub' in green, and 'online' in a smaller green font below it.

Smith+Nephew
Wound Club
Online

The logo for ISTAP, featuring a blue globe with the letters 'ISTAP' in a dark blue serif font overlaid on it.

skintears.org
ISTAP



Wound Care
Today
website

The logo for the Tissue Viability Society, featuring a blue square with white wavy lines and the text 'Tissue Viability Society' to its right.

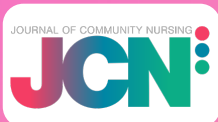
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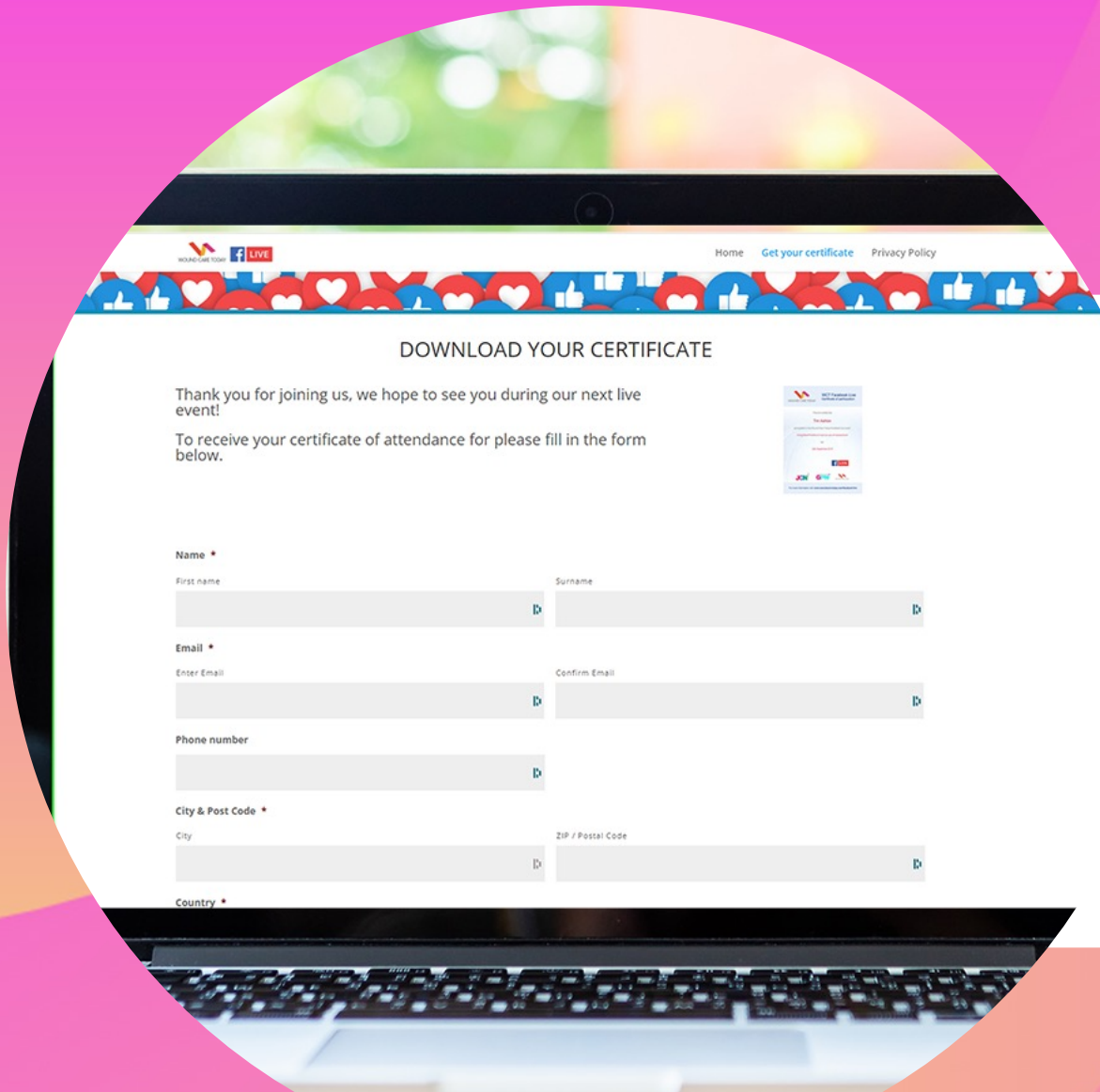
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