

“Hydro....what?”

Selecting the Right Dressing for Your Patient

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Choosing the Right Dressing

- The end goal of wound healing is dependent on balance
 - Moisture Balance
 - Bacterial Balance
 - Balance of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Forces



Choosing the Right Dressing

- Ultimately dressing choices should help the practitioner achieve some of these goals.
- The reason for the variety of dressings is because “No Two Wounds Are Alike”
- Some dressings absorb moisture while some donate moisture.
- Some dressings actively eliminate bacteria from the wound bed.

Choosing the Right Dressing

Transparent Films

- Film dressings are permeable to oxygen and allow water vapour to pass from inside. They are impermeable to bacteria and environmental contaminants.
- Maintain moist wound surface.
- Some degree of insulation (fluid retained next to wound surface).



Choosing the Right Dressing

Transparent Films- Indications for Use

- ✓ Stage I Ulcer, as a protective dressing
- ✓ Stage II-IV Ulcers as a cover dressing
- ✓ Autolytic debridement of devitalized tissue



Choosing the Right Dressing

Transparent Films-

Contraindications

- Ø Exudative Wounds
- Ø Wounds with sinus tract (unless used with packing)
- Ø Friable periwound skin
- Ø Known sensitivity



Choosing the Right Dressing Transparent Films- Guidelines

- Must have border of intact dry skin
- Frequency of change based on drainage amount or loss of seal
- Wear-time can be 2-7 days
- Remove using “lateral-pull” method or adhesive remover



Choosing the Right Dressing-Contact Layer

- Silicone-base dressing to prevent adherence to wounds
- Can be used with ointments, needs secondary cover dressing
- Wear time can be for several days depending on amount of drainage
- Can change secondary dressings as required over top
- Silicone loses its "tack" when moisture applied
- Can be used for painful wounds, wounds that bleed easily if dressing adheres, etc.



Choosing the Right Dressing- Hydrocolloids

- Contain hydroactive/absorptive particles that interact with exudate to form a gelatinous mass.
- Supports autolytic debridement



Choosing the Right Dressing- Hydrocolloids – Indications for Use

- ✓ Stage I ulcers as a protective dressing for high friction areas
- ✓ Stage II ulcers with minimal drainage
- ✓ Some unstageable ulcers in conjunction with wound gel to promote autolytic debridement



Choosing the Right Dressing- Hydrocolloids – Contraindications for Use

- Ø Highly exudating wounds
- Ø Wounds with sinus tracts (unless used with packing)
- Ø Friable skin around wound
- Ø Infected wounds
- Ø **Wounds on feet**



Choosing the Right Dressing- Hydrocolloids – Guidelines

- Liquid skin prep often used as base for skin around wound to protect from stripping/moisture accumulation/rolling of dressing



- Frequency of dressing changes based on drainage amount. Typical wear time 3-5 days
- Yellowish odorous exudate is normal when removing dressing due to “meltdown”. Cleanse wound and then assess for signs of infection.

Choosing the Right Dressing- Hydrogels

- Are either water-based or saline-based
- Help to maintain moist clean wound surface
- Are oxygen permeable and act to cool skin surface
- May moisten/soften slough or eschar
- Come in gel or sheet form; also hypertonic saline



Choosing the Right Dressing- Hydrogels- Indications for Use

- ✓ Stage II-IV ulcers with minimal drainage
- ✓ Supports moist wound environment and autolytic debridement
- ✓ Hydrogel sheets used for radiation burns as soothing treatment
- ✓ Some patients may experience temporary stinging if saline-based gel used
- ✓ Requires secondary cover dressing

Choosing the Right Dressing- Hydrogels – Guidelines for Use

- Frequency of dressing changes dependent on amount of drainage; typically every 1 to 2 days.
- Cover dressings are selected based on amount of protection needed.
- Hypertonic saline gel is used only on wounds containing necrotic material with the goal of debridement.

Choosing the Right Dressing- Hydrogels – Contraindications for Use

- Ø Highly exudating wounds.
- Ø Must match appropriate form of gel dressing to wound.



Choosing the Right Dressing- Calcium Alginates/ Hydrofibers

- Highly absorbent interactive dressings-
“super-slurper”.
- Alginates are fibrous mats derived from seaweed, have haemostatic properties.
- Both types are placed in the wound bed dry and convert to various degrees of viscous gel after contact with exudate.
- Various forms from sheets to ropes



Choosing the Right Dressing- Calcium Alginates/ Hydrofibers – Indications for Use

- ✓ Wounds with moderate to large amounts of exudate, as a wound filler dressing.
- ✓ Alginates can be used to reduce and control some bleeding in the wound bed.
- ✓ Needs secondary cover dressing. Wear-time dependent on amount of exudate.



Choosing the Right Dressing- Calcium Alginates/ Hydrofibers-

Contraindications for Use

- Ø Wounds with minimal exudate.
- Ø Wounds with dry eschar.
- Ø Partial thickness/Stage I-II ulcers.
- Ø Use cautiously in tunnels where wound base is not visible.



Choosing the Right Dressing- Foam Dressings

- Foam dressings absorb excess wound exudate while maintaining a moist wound environments.
- Support autolytic debridement in exudative wounds.



Choosing the Right Dressing- Foam Dressings – Indications for Use

- ✓ Stage III-IV with moderate-heavy drainage. For wounds with depth of dead space, use with packing.



Choosing the Right Dressing- Foam Dressings – Guidelines for Use

- May need to protect intact skin around wound with liquid film barrier depending on type of foam (not required for silicone-based foams).
- Must secure some foams with wraps or tape.
- Some foams have adhesive or silicone-base built in to hold in place.
- Dressing change frequency dependent on amount of drainage – typically every 2-5 days.

Choosing the Right Dressing- Foam Dressings –

Contraindications for Use

- Ø Partial-thickness wounds with no exudate.
- Ø Full-thickness wounds with dry eschar.
- Ø Wounds with sinus tracts, unless used with packing.



Choosing the Right Dressing- Hypertonic Saline

- High levels of sodium support fluid shift—pulls fluid out of wound to loosen slough to support debridement
- Works best in yellow-base, draining wounds
- Discontinue once wound bed clean
- Daily dressing, may cause increased drainage initially
- Protect periwound skin from maceration



Source: Dermatol Nurs © 2004 Jannetti Publications, Inc.

Choosing the Right Dressing- Antimicrobials - Silver Dressings

- Variety including sheets, ropes, alginates/hydrofibers, foams, sponges.
- Different amounts of silver active in wound bed at any one time.
- Ionized silver dressings require use of Sterile Water to clean wound as NaCl interacts with ions



Choosing the Right Dressing- Antimicrobials – Cadexomer Iodine

- Absorbent ointment placed onto wound bed to rid wound of debris and bacteria
- Indicated for use in draining ulcers with goal of reducing bacterial load
- “Rusty” coloured ointment will change to light yellow/beige as cadexomer iodine is released into the wound bed over time.



Choosing the Right Dressing- Antimicrobials – Cadexomer Iodine

Precautions

- Typical dressing frequency-1-2 days or when ointment colour has changed as mentioned above—maximum absorbency reached.
- DO NOT use in patients with iodine allergy. Use cautiously with patients having thyroid dysfunction.

Choosing the Right Dressing- Povidone Iodine (Betadine)



Appropriate for non-healing wounds



Choosing the Right Dressing- Povidone Iodine (Betadine)

- Recommended treatment for hard, dry, necrotic wounds that are non-healable and show no signs of systemic infection (redness, warmth, elevated WBC etc.)
- Most commonly seen in feet/toes/heels of people with poor arterial blood flow (confirmed by arterial doppler)
- “Paint” hard necrotic areas and surrounding skin daily to maintain and offload pressure/friction (pillows under calves, heel boots etc.)
- Advocate for Vascular Surgeon consult ASAP if clinically warranted
- Attempts at debridement in this patient population without supportive blood flow to extremity could lead to sepsis, amputation, death

Choosing the Right Dressing

Thank-you!
Questions?

