

TYPES OF WOUND DRESSINGS

Gauze Dressings: When uncertain about what to use, use gauze sponges moistened with saline until a protocol is recommended by wound care specialist/physician.

Hydrocolloid Dressings: This type of dressing protects excoriated, reddened, blistered skin. Made of carbohydrate based material with waterproof backing. Most have absorptive properties. *Dressings can be changed every 2-7 days.*

Transparent Dressings: This type of dressing protects against friction and is clear, adherent and non-absorbent. It is permeable to oxygen and air but not to water. It allows for visual inspection of the wound and *can be changed every 3-7 days if intact.* Change if loose, or wet. It will not absorb drainage so if fluid accumulates under dressing, the clinician can aspirate with a 26 gauge needle and then cover the puncture site. **These dressings should not be used on infected areas.**

Alginate Dressings: This dressing is made of seaweed and is absorptive. It is available as soft pads or ropes that will absorb drainage and can be used on infected wounds. Any secondary dressing should be non-occlusive as oxygen interacts with alginate for healing. As drainage is absorbed, it turns to gel that keeps the wound bed moist and promotes healing. *This is appropriate to use as long as the wound is draining. The frequency of dressing change depends on the drainage 1-2 times per day at first and then decrease to every 2-4 days.*

Foam Dressings: This is a sponge like polymer and may be coated with other materials. Some have absorbent properties - they may or may not be adherent. This product works well when a non-adherent surface is preferred. *Change when foam is not absorbing the drainage.*

Hydrogel: Water based and non-adherent. Is available as a gel, as flexible sheets, or as saturated gauze packing. This product expands in water but does not dissolve in it. Provides debridement by re-hydrating the wound and absorbing exudates from the wound. Recommended for leg ulcers and pressure ulcers. *Cover with secondary dressing and change daily or as needed to keep the wound moist.* Gauze can be used to fill space in large wounds. When using the sheets, cut to fit the wound as it can be irritating to surrounding skin.