SKIN TEAR ASSESSMENT & MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

‘STAR’ CLASSIFICATION

GENERAL GUIDELINES:
- Control bleeding by applying firm pressure initially. If bleeding persists, apply Melgisorb® as directed in the guideline.
- Gently realign skin flap if possible without undue stretching of the flap.
- Assess the skin tear and surrounding skin.
- Assess the person and their wound along with any factors that may delay healing.
- The length of time the dressing can be left on will depend on the level of exudate.

ENSURE A HOLISTIC ASSESSMENT OF THE PERSON WITH THE SKIN TEAR IS CONDUCTED

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:
- Visually assess the skin each shift and perform a skin assessment at least daily.
- Ensure a soap free wash is used to cleanse the skin and emollients applied at least daily as required for high risk patients.
- Protect the limbs with retention stockings (eg; tubular plus) in high risk patients.
- Ensure the patients fluid and nutritional intake is adequate.

CATEGORY 1A
A SKIN TEAR WHERE THE EDGES CAN BE REALIGNED TO THE NORMAL ANATOMICAL POSITION (WITHOUT UNDUE STRETCHING) AND THE SKIN FLAP COLOUR IS NOT PALE, DUSKY OR DARKENED.

- Cleanse with normal saline, using aseptic technique.
- Approximate edges with a moistened saline cotton bud.
- Apply a Mepilex® Border dressing.
- Leave intact for approx. 3-5 days, or change if the dressing is 75% saturated.
- Once it is ready to be changed, remove the dressing and cleanse the wound. If wound has not healed, apply a new Mepilex® Border dressing and leave for up to 7 days -depending on exudate level.
- Draw an arrow in the direction of the skin flap top of the dressing to avoid further trauma at next dressing change.
- Document in wound chart.

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.

- Cleanse with normal saline, using aseptic technique.
- Approximate edges with a moistened saline cotton bud.
- If wound is bleeding, apply Melgisorb® as a primary dressing.
- Then, apply Mepilex® Border as a secondary dressing.
- After 48 hours - remove dressing and review skin tear.
- Cleanse wound as above and apply a Mepilex® Border dressing.
- Leave intact for approx. 3-5 days, depending on level of exudate.
- Draw an arrow in the direction of the skin flap top of the dressing.
- Document in wound chart.

CATEGORY 2A
A SKIN TEAR WHERE THE EDGES CANNOT BE REALIGNED TO THE NORMAL ANATOMICAL POSITION AND THE SKIN OR FLAP COLOUR IS NOT PALE, DUSKY OR DARKENED.

- Cleanse with normal saline, using aseptic technique.
- Approximate edges (as much as possible) with a moistened saline cotton bud.
- Apply a Mepilex® Border dressing.
- Leave intact for 3-5 days, depending on level of exudate.
- After this time, remove the dressing and cleanse the wound as above. If wound has not healed, apply a new Mepilex® Border dressing and leave for up to 7 days.
- Draw an arrow in the direction of the skin top of the dressing.
- Document in wound chart.

CATEGORY 2B
A SKIN TEAR WHERE THE EDGES CANNOT BE REALIGNED TO THE NORMAL ANATOMICAL POSITION AND THE SKIN OR FLAP COLOUR IS PALER, DUSKY OR DARKENED.

- Cleanse with normal saline, using aseptic technique.
- Approximate edges (as much as possible) with a moistened saline cotton bud.
- If wound is bleeding, apply Melgisorb® as a primary dressing.
- Then, apply Mepilex® Border as a secondary dressing.
- After 48 hours - remove dressing and review skin tear.
- Cleanse wound as above and apply a Mepilex® Border dressing.
- Leave intact for up to 3-5 days.
- Draw an arrow in the direction of the skin flap top of the dressing.
- Document in wound chart.
- Consider applying Mepitel® as the primary dressing once bleeding has ceased.

CATEGORY 3
A SKIN TEAR WHERE THE SKIN FLAP IS COMPLETELY ABSENT.

- Cleanse with normal saline, using aseptic technique.
- Debride any non-viable tissue.
- If wound is bleeding, apply Melgisorb® as a primary dressing.
- Then, apply Mepilex® Border as a secondary dressing.
- After 48 hours - remove dressing and review the wound.
- If the wound is superficial or partial thickness, apply a Mepilex® Border dressing.
- Leave intact for up to 3-5 days, depending on level of exudate.
- Document in wound chart.
- Consider applying Mepitel® as the primary dressing once bleeding has ceased.