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**How to change/apply a simple dressing after a minor skin tear, cut or abrasion**

**Items needed. Collect together before you start:-**

* Cooled boiled water
* Clean scissors (place in boiling water for 2 minutes or wipe thoroughly with alcohol gel)
* Alcohol gel/soap and water
* Clean kitchen roll /freshly washed towel
* Clean sterile dressing

 Dressings can be purchased from any pharmacy or even Amazon.

Any sterile dressing is better than leaving a wound exposed to the air or bacteria that naturally lives on our intact skin.

Make sure the dressing is a good size and the adhesive area is not going to touch the wound.

Some suggested dressings are Mepore or Leukomed or a similar cotton dressing.

For more fragile or older skin use a Silicone dressing which is less likely to stick to the wound e.g. Kliniderm Foam Adhesive/ Mepilex Border, Allevyn Simple Border or a pharmacy own brand.

If your skin is thin, delicate and extremely likely to tear please apply a non-adhesive dressing, secured with micropore and a soft bandage lightly and make an appointment to see The Nursing team.

If you have been supplied with a dressing by the Nursing Team or a prescription please use this.

**You must KEEP THE DRESSING DRY, if it does get wet change it.**

Change the dressing every 2-3 days if it is a cotton or paper type dressing.

Change the dressing 4-7 days if it is a silicone type dressing.

If the dressing is becoming soiled sooner change it and seek advice from the Nursing Team.

Rest the area, if it is a hand or lower limb elevate whenever you can.

***If the wound is not improving or healing after 2 weeks please make an appointment to see the Practice Nurse team or if you have any concerns***

**Procedure**

* Wash your hands well with warm water and soap for 20 seconds, dry well with either clean kitchen towel or a freshly washed towel
* Open the dressing you are going to apply taking care not to touch the dressing area which is going to touch/cover the wound
* Remove the old dressing carefully and slowly, in the direction of any flap of skin if there is one.
* Soak of dressing with cooled boiled water if it is stuck to the wound or surrounding skin
* Once removed look at the wound, take a photo if you are able, place a tape measure near the area so you can see any changes in the wound size at next dressing. Look for changes, deterioration and healing, a photo helps you remember what it was like last time. Most importantly look for Signs of Infection. See below for signs of concern/infection
* DO NOT TOUCH THE WOUND or the surrounding area.
* Now wash your hands again if you are able or use Alcohol Gel
* If the area needs cleaning ( mucky, bloody) you can use cool boiled water poured over the area slowly, then dry around the wound with a clean piece of kitchen roll, again do not touch the wound.
* Carefully remove any backing on the clean dressing and apply gently over the wound. Ensure any adhesive edges do not touch the wound. You can cut off one edge of a dressing to remove the adhesive and layer another dressing over the top if the dressing is too small
* Smooth down any adhesive edges of the dressing, use tape to stick the dressing down if it is lifting.

Signs of Infection Please contact the surgery, call 111 or attend A&E if you have 1 or more of below:-

* Redness spreading out away from the wound in one direction or all around the wound ( you may see a small red/pink area at the wound edges, no wider out than 1cm, this is a normal part of healing).
* Heat around the wound.
* Increased pain or swelling.
* Pus, or heavy discharge or increase in discharge or bleeding from the wound or surrounding skin.
* Strange or increased odour.