Choosing a Wound Care Product

Alginate Dressings

Alginate dressings are made of soft, non-woven fibers derived from seaweed. They are usually in the forms of pads, ropes, or ribbons. Alginate dressings absorb wound exudate and form a gel-like covering over the wound, maintaining a moist wound environment. Most alginates absorb many times their own weight. The dry dressing, however, is extremely lightweight.

*Suggested Brands: Maxorb Extra, Aquacel

Antimicrobial Dressings

Antimicrobial agents effective against a broad range of microorganisms, using silver as the antimicrobial agent.

*Suggested Brands: Silvasorb Gel, Silvasorb, Arglaes Powder, Aquacel AG, Acticoat

Bordered Gauze

A "Band-Aid" application product. An excellent secondary dressing especially when a daily dressing change is needed. Combines several distinct components including: an absorptive layer, a non-adherent contact layer, and an adhesive border.

Suggested Brands: Medline Bordered Gauze, Covaderm

Composite Dressings

Composite dressings combine physically distinct components into a single dressing that provides multiple functions. These functions must include but are not limited to: a) bacterial and waterproof barrier, b) absorptive layer (other than alginate, foam, hydrocolloid, or hydrogel) and c) semi-adherent over wound.

Suggested Brands: Stratasorb, Telfa Island Dressings, Alldress

Compression Bandages

Promotes venous return. Used for the treatment of venous disease. Can be left in place for up to 7 days.
Foam Dressings

Foams are highly absorbent dressings generally made from a hydrophilic polyurethane foam. There are various absorption rates of the different foams on the market. Some have adhesive tapes surrounding an 'island' of foam. Highly absorbent foams may allow the caregiver to change dressings less frequently. Foams that absorb exudate and keep it off the wound will decrease maceration to the surrounding tissue.

Suggested Brands: Optifoam, Carrasmart Foam, Allevyn

Hydrocolloid Dressings

Hydrocolloids are occlusive and adhesive wafer dressings which combine absorbent colloidal materials with adhesive elastomers to manage light to moderate amounts of wound exudate. Most hydrocolloids react with wound exudate to form a gel-like covering which protects the wound bed and maintains a moist wound environment. Hydrocolloid powders and pastes are also available with increased absorptive capacity.

Suggested Brands: Exuderm Satin, Exuderm Sacrum, Duoderm

Hydrogel Dressings

Indicated for full thickness wounds with minimal or no exudate. The quantity of hydrogel filler used for each wound should not exceed the amount needed to line the surface of the wound. Effective in hydrating wound surfaces and liquefying necrotic tissue on the wound surface. Non-adherent and can be removed without trauma to the wound bed. "Soothing" effect promotes patient acceptance.

Suggested Brands: Skintegrity Hydrogel, Silvasorb (antimicrobial), Carrasmart, Duoderm Gel

Hydrogel Sheet

A solid or sheet form of hydrogel. Ideal for shallow wounds with no to small amount of exudate. Excellent option when periwound integrity is compromised. Glycerin based sheets are bacteriostatic and fungistatic.

Suggested Brands: Derma-Gel, Silvasorb Sheet, Tenderwet Active, Carradres

Polymer Gel Pad Dressings
A polyacrylate (polymer) pad containing a super absorbent polymer, saturated with Ringer's solution. Rapidly debrides necrotic tissue. As the debris in the wound moves into the pad, the pad releases the Ringer's solution. Appropriate for dry to heavily draining wounds. Ideal for wounds with slough or necrotic tissue. Good alternative to wet-to-dry.

Suggested Brands: Tenderwet Active

**Retention Tape**

Nonwoven fabric with adhesive used to secure a primary or secondary dressing in place. It conforms to the body's natural contours.

Suggested Brands: Medfix, Medipore

**Stretch Net Dressings**

Tubular stretch net dressing. Ideal for holding primary dressings in place, especially when adhesives are contraindicated.

Suggested Brands: Medline Elastic Net

**Second Generation Barrier**

A thick barrier paste intended to provide protection and support for at-risk, denuded, or macerated skin that is continually being assaulted by urine, stool, or drainage.

Suggested Brands: Soothe & Cool Skin Paste, Remedy Nutrashield, Remedy Calazime

**Transparent Film Dressings**

Transparent adhesive films are typically semi-permeable membrane dressings that are waterproof yet permeable to oxygen and water vapor. They help prevent bacterial contamination. They help maintain a moist wound environment, facilitate cellular migration and promote autolysis of necrotic tissue by trapping moisture at the wound surface. Some of the newer films are designed to keep IV sites dry. These films have a higher Moisture Vapor Permeability (MVP) and should not be used for wounds.

Suggested Brands: Suresite, Opsite, Tegaderm

**Wound Cleansers**
Wound cleansers are solutions used to remove foreign material, debris, exudate, and necrotic tissue from the wound. They reduce surface tension between wound bed and debris, providing more effective cleansing, especially for dirty/necrotic wounds.

Suggested Brands: Skintegrity Wound Cleanser, CarraKlenz, MicroKlenz