**Adhesive film dressings**

*Film dressings provide a vapour and oxygen permeable barrier against contamination*

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**Generic and Proprietary Names**
- Activeheal film dressing.
- Bioclusive.
- Blisterfilm.
- C-view.
- Central Gard.
- Hydrofilm.
- Mefil.
- Mepore Ultra.
- Opsite Flexigrid.
- Polyskin.
- Tegaderm.

**Classification**
- Vapour-permeable films and membranes.

**Indications**
- Minor burns.
- Pressure areas.
- Donor sites.
- Postoperative wounds.
- A variety of minor injuries including abrasions and lacerations.
- As a protective cover to prevent skin breakdown due to friction or continuous exposure to moisture.
- Commonly used as a secondary dressing over alginates or gels.

**Contraindications**
- Not recommended for application over deep cavity wounds or full-thickness burns.
- Not be used interchangeably with film products designed for intravenous cannula retention as cannula dressings are designed to keep the cannula site dry and have a much higher moisture vapour transpiration rate.

**Actions**
- Adhesive film dressings consist of a thin polyurethane membrane coated with a layer of adhesive.
- The dressing is permeable to both water vapour and oxygen, but impermeable to micro-organisms and water.
- The film provides an effective barrier to external contamination, as well as producing a moist environment for healing.

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**Contraindications**
- Not suitable for large, heavily exuding wounds.
- Not normally suitable for chronic leg ulcers.

**Administration**
- Brands have different systems to facilitate application of the dressing to the surface of the wound. To ensure correct application the manufacturer’s instructions should be consulted.
- Dressing removal should be facilitated by stretching. This will reduce pain and minimise damage to the epidermis.

**Nursing Considerations**
- Vapour loss may occur at a slower rate than exudate is generated, allowing fluid to accumulate under the dressing. This can lead to maceration of the tissue and wrinkling that could jeopardise the adhesive seal, allowing bacterial entry.
- Where the film is not being used as a primary dressing it may be more cost-effective to consider the use of a product available on a roll.
- Some products have a grid on the backing that can be used to monitor the size of the wound.
- When using the dressing as skin protection it is important to remember that it does not reduce pressure on the tissue.
- Frequency of change will depend on the characteristics of the wound. This is generally for periods of up to seven days.

**Patient Teaching**
- Adhesive film dressings are comfortable and normally allow inspection of the wound and assessment of healing without having to remove them.

**References**

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Nurses should refer to manufacturer’s summary of product characteristics and to appropriate local guidelines.