

## SKIN TEARS AND HOW TO TREAT THEM

*Skin tears are a common wound seen in the elderly population due to their fragile skin. A skin tear is a wound caused by friction, shear and/or blunt force resulting in the separation of the skin layers. Healthcare providers have likely seen a skin tear before, but some are unaware that there are three different types of skin tears according to the International Skin Tear Advisory Panel (ISTAP). Let's review how to distinguish between the three different types and discuss how best to treat skin tears and which practices to avoid.*

### ISTAP Skin Tear Classification System

Type 1 Skin Tear	Type 2 Skin Tear	Type 3 Skin Tear
		
<b>Skin Flap Intact</b> Flap can be repositioned to cover the wound bed	<b>Partial Flap Loss</b> Flap only partially covers the wound bed	<b>Complete Flap Loss</b> Entire wound bed exposed

## TREATMENT OPTIONS

*When able, reapproximate edges using a moistened cotton tipped applicator. The key to treating skin tears is to use a gentle dressing that allows for the least amount of dressing changes. Some options include:*

- Hydrogel
- Nonstick dressings (like oil emulsion)
- Silicone foam dressings

*Silicone foam dressings are useful as they can stay in place for up to seven days.*

*TIP: Use a pen to mark an arrow on the dressing before application, pointing in the direction in which the dressing should be removed to leave the skin flap in place.*



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## WHAT TO AVOID

*Avoid sutures, staples, and over use of adhesive strips in vulnerable skin. These types of treatments can cause additional trauma, and an uncomplicated wound may evolve into a complex wound.*

