

# WHAT IS A SKIN TEAR?



A skin tear is a separation of the top layer of your skin from the underlying layers.

## How did you get a skin tear?

Your skin tear could be the result of bumping into equipment or furniture, falling, or being hit with an object. You can also get a skin tear by removing tape from your skin too quickly. Some skin tears can happen during routine care from a caregiver. Skin tears are more common in older people.

## What does it mean to you?

- » Your skin tear may be painful and bleed. You may also have redness, itching, or swelling, which should go away in about 5 days.

## What should you do about it?

**It is very important to follow the directions given to you by your doctor or nurse.**

These directions may include:

- » Keep your bandage dry
- » Apply moisturizer to your skin
- » Do not disturb your bandage
- » Eat healthy foods and drink plenty of water

## Helpful hints

- » Drink plenty of fluids
- » Keep your skin moisturized
- » Older individuals have a higher risk due to thinner skin
- » Adequate lighting reduces the possibility of bumping into furniture
- » If you must use tape, roll it off of your skin. Do not rip it off

*This document is not intended to treat, diagnose or prescribe. The information is for educational purposes only and is not meant to take the place of a consultation with a licensed healthcare professional.*

### How to change your bandage:

- 1** Wash your hands with soap and water.
- 2** Collect the supplies you will need.
- 3** Get into a comfortable position to change your bandage.

### How to remove your bandage:

- 4** Place your hand into a small clean plastic bag.
- 5** Grasp the old bandage with your bag-covered hand and gently remove your bandage.
- 6** Turn the bag inside out over the old bandage.
- 7** Close the bag tightly and throw it away.

### How to examine your arterial ulcer:

- 8** Look at your skin tear. If there is a flap of loose skin, put it back in place. If the flap is missing, it is healing and will slowly become smaller and drain less. New tissue may be pink or red and may look lumpy or shiny. **Do not disturb this tissue. Clean it gently.**
- 9** Tell your doctor or nurse if your wound gets bigger, has more drainage, drainage changes to yellow or green, smells bad, is more painful or swollen, is not better in 2-4 weeks, if the flap is still present and not staying in place in 2-4 weeks.

### Bandage your wound *(doctor or nurse instructions):*

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### Doctor or nurse contact information:

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