

Skin Tears: Assessment, Prevention and Treatment

Site Applicability

All VCH and PHC sites

Practice Level

For the following professions (within their respective scope of practice):

- NP, RN, RPN, LPN

Requirements

VCH and PHC nurses will follow the Decision Support Tool (DST) developed by the Provincial Nursing Skin and Wound Committee (see guideline link below) when providing care for Skin Tears.

Need to Know

- Older adults are at greater risk for skin tears due to age-related changes to the skin including thinning of the epidermal, dermal and subcutaneous layers, flattening of the basal cell layer which compromises cohesion between the epidermal and dermal layers, and impaired circulation. Skin tears are categorized in terms of the amount of tissue loss; the provincial guideline uses the International Skin Tear Advisory Panel - Skin Tears Classification (ISTAP, 2015).
- Studies have shown a significant decrease in the incidence and prevalence of skin tears after implementation of no-rinse or soap-free cleansers and routine moisturizer use, strategies to modify the environment and protect the client's extremities.

Guideline

The Provincial DST Guideline: Assessment, Prevention and Treatment of Skin Tears provides detailed guidance on how to prevent skin tears, how to assess for skin tears and determine the type of skin tear and what interventions are needed for each type of skin tear.

See [here](#) for the Guideline Summary.

Documentation

As per site documentation guidelines.

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Approved By: <i>(committee or position)</i>	VCH
	<p>Endorsed by</p> <p>VCH: (Regional SharePoint 2nd Reading)</p> <p>Health Authority Profession Specific Advisory Council Chairs (HAPSAC)</p> <p>Health Authority & Area Specific Interprofessional Advisory Council Chairs (HAIAC)</p> <p>Operations Directors</p> <p>Professional Practice Directors</p> <p>PHC: Residential Practice council</p> <p>Professional Practice Standards Committee</p> <p>Final Sign-off & Approval for Posting by</p> <p>Barb Lawrie, Vice President Professional Practice and Chief Clinical Information Officer, VCH</p> <p>Professional Practice Standards Committee, PHC</p>
Owners: <i>(optional)</i>	VCH
	<p>Revised by</p> <p>Provincial Nursing Skin and Wound Committee in collaboration with Regional Skin and Wound Committees from NHA, IHA, FHA, VIHA, PHSA and VCH/PHC</p>

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