

Management of Bleeding Skin Tears

SKIN AND WOUND CARE

Applies to:	Physicians, Nurse Practitioners and Nurses caring for bleeding skin tears.
Purpose:	To provide details on how to stop the bleeding before cleansing and dressing the wound.

Actions for the Management of Bleeding Skin Tears

If the skin tear is bleeding, the goal is to stop the bleeding before cleansing and dressing the wound:

- Cover the wound with an absorbent pad, elevate the limb and apply pressure to the wound until bleeding is controlled.

If bleeding fails to stop with pressure, apply a hemostatic dressing ([calcium alginate dressing](#) or [hemostatic agent](#)) to control bleeding. Contact a Physician/NP, if bleeding has not stopped:

- Within 15 minutes for clients on anticoagulant medication.
- Within 5-7 minutes for those not on anticoagulant medications.
- Once bleeding is controlled:
 - Gently cleanse the clots from the skin tear.
 - Approximate the skin flap if present.
 - Re-apply a hemostatic dressing, such as a calcium alginate, to the skin tear and cover with an appropriate cover dressing.
- Monitor the dressing frequently to ensure that bleeding has not restarted.
 - If at home, teach the client or the family to check the dressing. Reinforce handwashing techniques.
- Assess the hemostatic dressing 24 hours later:
 - If bleeding is controlled then consider discontinuing the use of the hemostatic dressing and apply an appropriate dressing.
 - If there is a risk of further bleeding, then continue with the hemostatic dressing and reassess in 24 hours.