Skin Tear Laceration Care

A skin tear is a tear of the skin in which the top layer of skin has been peeled off like the outer skin of an onion. This is a common problem with aging as the skin becomes thinner and more fragile.

This is often repaired for you by your caregiver with tape or skin adhesive strips. This keeps the skin that has been peeled off in contact with the healthier skin which is left beneath. Sometimes the peeled skin will grow back on but often it turns black and dies. Even when this happens, the torn skin acts as a good dressing until the skin underneath gets healthier and repairs itself.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- A dressing, depending on the location of the laceration, may have been applied over the tape or skin adhesive strips. This may be changed once per day or as instructed. If the dressing sticks, it may be soaked off with soapy water.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- There is redness, swelling, or increasing pain in the wound.
- Pus is coming from wound.
- An unexplained oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C) develops.
- You notice a foul smell coming from the wound or dressing.

YOU MIGHT NEED A TETANUS SHOT NOW IF:

- You have no idea when you had the last one.
- You have never had a tetanus shot before.
- Your wound had dirt in it.

If you need a tetanus shot, ***and you choose not to get one***, there is a rare chance of getting tetanus. Sickness from tetanus can be serious. *If you got a tetanus shot, your arm may swell, get red and warm to the touch at the shot site. This is common and not a problem.*

Document Released: 04/07/2004 Document Re-Released: 01/09/2011
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