

**FAST HEALING OF PRESSURE ULCERS IN PEOPLE WITH A SPINAL CORD INJURY (SCI) THROUGH THE USE OF POLYMERIC MEMBRANE DRESSINGS**

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**Introduction:** Pressure ulcers are a common complication in spinal cord injury patients. According to the literature, 50-80% of these individuals suffer from pressure ulcers at some time, and 85% of all pressure ulcers are caused by sitting.

It is challenging to find a dressing that does not shift or come off during patient transfers. Dressing pressure ulcers near the rectum is especially problematic. Healing is often slow and wound infections are prevalent.

**Aim:** To teach our patients about prevention, pressure relief devices and how to cope with their paralyzed body in order to prevent ulcers from occurring and help close the ulcers already in place.

**Methods:** We use polymeric membrane dressings, which are flexible with soft edges enabling them to stay in place well. Polymeric membrane dressings provide significant wound pain relief and contain ingredients which draw and concentrate healing substances from the body into the wound bed to promote rapid healing, while facilitating autolytic debridement by loosening bonds between the slough and the wound. These unique dressings add moisture to dry wounds while absorbing excess fluid, so they are recommended for dry wounds with exposed tendons as well as for heavily exuding wounds.

**Results:** Offloading along with the use of polymeric membrane dressings has resulted in quicker healing. Pressure ulcers of grade 3 usually close completely in 4-6 weeks. When we used other modern wound dressings, healing took about 2-3 times longer. Wounds treated with polymeric membrane dressings have far fewer infections, as well. Polymeric membrane dressings also tend to stay in place during transfers and fit well, even when applied near the rectum.

**Conclusions:** Changing to polymeric membrane dressings has resulted in dramatically improved healing rates on our patients with spinal cord injuries.