

Table 6
Categories of Products and Devices Commonly Used in Wound Care

Category	Description	Characteristics	Concerns	Applications
Gauze, dry or wet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Woven natural cotton fibers; non-woven rayon and polyester blends; available in pads and rolls, sterile and non-sterile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be dampened with saline or water Inexpensive Facilitates wet-to-dry debridement Non-adherent when used as wet-to-moist dressing Minimally to moderately absorbent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wet-to-dry debridement painful, may damage healthy tissue Woven variety is abrasive May dehydrate wound Requires frequent changes Packing may harden, causing further pressure injury 	<p><i>As primary dressing:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deep wounds; can be packed into undermined or tunneling areas <p><i>As secondary dressing:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can maintain a moist environment if kept moist, or under an occlusive secondary dressing Can be used in large, necrotic wounds or presence of soft tissue infection
Impregnated gauze pads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Woven or non-woven materials in which substances such as saline, water, iodinated agents, petrolatum, zinc compounds, sodium chloride, chlorhexadine gluconate, bismuth tri-bromophenate, or other materials have been incorporated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inexpensive Non-adherent with specific product formulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some impregnated material may be toxic to living tissue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See above
Transparent films	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adhesive, transparent polyurethane membrane 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occlusive and waterproof Retains moisture Impermeable to bacteria and contamination Promotes autolysis, moist wound healing and epithelialization Wound is visible Non-absorbent May be changed every 5-7 days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should not be used with moderate to heavy exudate Risk of macerating surrounding skin 	<p><i>As primary dressing:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open partial-thickness wounds, minimal exudate, clean wound base or intact skin (Stage 1) <p><i>As secondary dressing:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be used as secondary dressing over other more absorptive products
Hydrogels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Glycerin- or water-based gel, amorphous or supported by fabric Available as amorphous gels, wafers, sheets and impregnated gauze. Available with or without adhesive borders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-adherent Fills dead space Semi-occlusive Promotes autolysis, moist wound healing Easy to apply and remove Minimally absorbent Retains moisture and rehydrates wound 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk of macerating surrounding tissue Secondary dressing required Requires daily application (except when applied with adhesive borders) Dries out easily Risk of candidiasis 	<p><i>As primary dressing:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full-thickness wounds with clean base and minimal or no exudate Partial-thickness wounds with adherent necrosis or slough with minimal or no exudate

Hydrocolloids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adhesive wafers composed of gelatin, pectin and carboxymethyl-cellulose. Available in wafers, sheets, paste or granules. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occlusive and waterproof Retains moisture Impermeable to bacteria and contamination Promotes autolysis and moist wound healing Moderately absorbent Easy to apply 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should not be used with heavy exudates Should not be used when soft tissue infection is present May be difficult to remove; may have significant order on removal, due to anaerobic colonization 	<p><i>As primary dressing:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intact skin or a clean wound base with light to moderate exudates Partial-thickness wounds with adherent necrosis or slough <p><i>As secondary dressing:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over wound fillers in deep wounds without undermining or tunneling
Alginates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-woven fibers containing calcium sodium salts of alginic acid derived from seaweed Available in pads or ropes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-adherent Highly absorbent Promotes autolysis Can be used on infected wounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires a secondary dressing Should not be used on dry or low-exudate wounds; may desiccate wound Requires daily application 	<p><i>As primary dressing:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full-thickness wound with moderate to heavy exudate Can be packed into areas of tunneling or undermining
Foams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hydrophilic polyurethane foam Available in wafers, sheets, pillows with film covering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-adherent Easy to apply and remove Highly absorbent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires a secondary dressing (unless combined with an adhesive border) 	<p><i>As primary dressing:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full-thickness wound with moderate to heavy exudate May be used as "intermediate" dressing for absorbing excessive exudate over packing material
Wound fillers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copolymer starch, dextranomer beads or hydrocolloid paste that swells on contact with wound fluid to form a gel Available in pastes, beads, powders, gels and fiber layers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-adherent Easy to apply and remove Moderately to highly absorbent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usually requires a secondary dressing 	<p><i>As a primary dressing:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full-thickness wounds with moderate to heavy exudate to fill dead space Fiber layers can be packed into areas of tunneling and undermining
Composite dressings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combines various dressing categories in one product Varies among manufacturers 	Provides multiple functions (such as bacterial barrier, absorptive layer, adhesive border, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use may be confusing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Depends on components