**Table 6**

**Categories of Products and Devices Commonly Used in Wound Care**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Concerns</th>
<th>Applications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Gauze, dry or wet   | • Woven natural cotton fibers; non-woven rayon and polyester blends; available in pads and rolls, sterile and non-sterile | • 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 | • 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 | **As primary dressing:**  
• Deep wounds; can be packed into undermining or tunneling areas  
As secondary dressing:  
• 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 | • Woven or non-woven materials in which substances such as saline, water, iodinated agents, petrolatum, zinc compounds, sodium chloride, chlorhexidine gluconate, bismuth tri-bromo-phenate, or other materials have been incorporated | • Inexpensive  
• Non-adherent with specific product formulations | Some impregnated material may be toxic to living tissue | **See above** |
| Transparent films    | • Adhesive, transparent polyurethane membrane                                | • 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 | Should not be used with moderate to heavy exudate  
• Risk of macerating surrounding skin | **As primary dressing:**  
• Open partial-thickness wounds, minimal exudate, clean wound base or intact skin (Stage 1)  
As secondary dressing:  
• May be used as secondary dressing over other more absorptive products |
| Hydrogels            | • 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 | • Non-adherent  
• Fills dead space  
• Semi-occlusive  
• Promotes autolysis, moist wound healing  
• Easy to apply and remove  
• Minimally absorbent  
• Retains moisture and rehydrates wound | Risk of macerating surrounding tissue  
• Secondary dressing required  
• Requires daily application (except when applied with adhesive borders)  
• Dries out easily  
• Risk of candidiasis | **As primary dressing:**  
• Full-thickness wounds with clean base and minimal or no exudate  
• Partial-thickness wounds with adherent necrosis or slough with minimal or no exudate |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dressing Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hydrocolloids</td>
<td>Adhesive wafers composed of gelatin, pectin and carboxymethylcellulose. Available in wafers, sheets, paste or granules.</td>
<td>As primary dressing: • Intact skin or a clean wound base with light to moderate exudates • Partial-thickness wounds with adherent necrosis or slough As secondary dressing: • Over wound fillers in deep wounds without undermining or tunneling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Occlusive and waterproof • Retains moisture • Impermeable to bacteria and contamination • Promotes autolysis and moist wound healing • Moderately absorbent • Easy to apply</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>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</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alginates</td>
<td>Non-woven fibers containing calcium sodium salts of algic acid derived from seaweed • Available in pads or ropes</td>
<td>As primary dressing: • Full-thickness wound with moderate to heavy exudate • Can be packed into areas of tunneling or undermining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-adherent • Highly absorvent • Promotes autolysis • Can be used on infected wounds</td>
<td>Requires a secondary dressing (unless combined with an adhesive border)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Requires a secondary dressing • Should not be used on dry or low-exudate wounds; may desiccate wound • Requires daily application</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foams</td>
<td>Hydrophilic polyurethane foam • Available in wafers, sheets, pillows with film covering</td>
<td>As primary dressing: • Full-thickness wound with moderate to heavy exudate • May be used as &quot;intermediate&quot; dressing for absorbing excessive exudate over packing material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-adherent • Easy to apply and remove • Highly absorvent</td>
<td>Requires a secondary dressing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wound fillers</td>
<td>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</td>
<td>As a primary dressing: • Full-thickness wounds with moderate to heavy exudate to fill dead space • Fiber layers can be packed into areas of tunneling and undermining</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-adherent • Easy to apply and remove • Moderately to highly absorvent</td>
<td>Usually requires a secondary dressing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composite dressings</td>
<td>Combines various dressing categories in one product • Varies among manufacturers</td>
<td>Use may be confusing</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provides multiple functions (such as bacterial barrier, absorptive layer, adhesive border, etc.)</td>
<td>Depends on components</td>
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