PERISTOMAL SKIN:
Management and Prevention of Complications

A SPECIAL REPORT ABOUT OSTOMY CARE
INTRODUCTION

As stomas become increasingly prevalent, especially in hospital and long-term care facilities, it is critical that health care professionals understand the importance of skin care. Preventing peristomal skin complications can have a significant impact on the quality of life of patients and can help patients lead a fuller, more active life after ostomy surgery. Effective skin management is a key component of stoma care, by helping to control the risk of complications, improve patient outcomes, and reduce costs.

MANAGING PERISTOMAL SKIN

Peristomal skin complications can be costly, time consuming, and dangerous for patients. To reduce the risk of dermatitis, infection, and other peristomal skin complications, it is critical that health care professionals adhere to best practices and use effective medical products designed to optimize peristomal skin management. One key component of this care is using a medical adhesive that protects fragile skin, supports longer wear times, is moisture resistant, and can be removed without damaging the skin. This will help reduce the risk of some of the most common peristomal skin complications while allowing patients with stomas to live full, active lives.
Peristomal skin complications affect approximately one third of ostomy patients just 90 days after surgery. These complications can severely affect quality of life for patients, be uncomfortable or painful, and lead to more serious complications and even death. They can also become a significant financial burden, greatly increasing the costs of ostomy surgery and consuming significant time and resources for health care professionals.³

**Common Peristomal Skin Complications**

To reduce the risk to ostomy patients and control costs, it is important for health care professionals to understand some of the most common peristomal skin complications and their effects:

**Allergic and Irritant Contact Dermatitis** – The most common form of chemical irritation is in the peristomal area. It usually occurs when effluent from the stoma comes into contact with the skin and creates sensitivity. This can lead to reddening, itching, and pain. Peristomal contact dermatitis can also result from allergies associated with medical adhesives and barrier products.⁴

**Papular Overgranulation** – This complication occurs when there is an inadequate seal around the stoma, and it can manifest as red lesions at the mucocutaneous junction.⁴

**Infection** – Infection from bacteria or fungus frequently occurs when the peristomal area is exposed to feces or other foreign material. Hair pulling from the removal of medical adhesives can also cause folliculitis, which can progress to an abscess.⁴
Mechanical Trauma – Frequent removal of medical adhesives can lead to skin irritation and other issues in the peristomal area. Studies show that using a medical adhesive product with an adhesive force of two newtons or less may lower the incidence of dermatological damage.\(^4,5\)

Pressure Ulcer/Injury – Weakened peristomal skin is frequently affected by pressure ulcers/injuries, particularly when the patient has other peristomal complications or a hernia.\(^4\)

Peristomal Skin Complications Are Costly and Time Consuming

Because peristomal skin complications affect such a large percentage of ostomy patients and can have serious, long-lasting effects, they can add a significant amount to the total cost of ostomy surgery. A recent study showed that patients with complications had a hospital readmission rate of 47% compared with 33% for patients without complications. The same study also showed that the total health care costs for patients with peristomal skin complications were $80,000 higher over 120 days than for patients without such complications.\(^3\)

Peristomal Skin Complications Affect Patients’ Quality of Life

Peristomal skin complications can be uncomfortable and dangerous for patients, and they often lead to more serious complications and even death. Many complications are painful and lead to inflammation. They may also affect a patient’s ability to be active and lead a normal life.\(^4\) In one study, which attempted to measure the impact of peristomal skin complications on patients’ lives, patients with irritant contact dermatitis reported significantly lower quality of life scores than did patients without this complication. The study also noted that many patients were unaware that these effects were abnormal and did not seek additional care. This finding highlights the need for health care professionals to be proactive in the prevention and management of potential complications.\(^1\)
Best practices in skin care can help reduce the risk of complications and ensure good outcomes for patients. Health care professionals should be taking a proactive stance, working to identify complications rapidly before they become more serious and educating patients on potential risk factors, best practices, and warning signs. A key component of this effort should be the use of more effective and safer medical adhesives.

The Importance of Better Medical Adhesives

Medical adhesives can have a significant impact on many of the most common peristomal skin complications. This means that health care professionals should choose a medical adhesive that is gentle, secure, and water resistant to protect the skin and reduce damage. Better medical adhesives require fewer changes, thereby reducing the mechanical trauma on the skin. They are also gentler, helping to lower the risk of folliculitis on removal and reduce the risk of infection. Secure and waterproof adhesives will better protect the peristomal area from foreign material and reduce leakage, thus helping to prevent papular overgranulation. Hypoallergenic adhesives are also critical to reducing the risk of allergic contact dermatitis and related complications. By choosing a more effective medical adhesive with these qualities, health care professionals can help ensure that they are optimizing their patients’ quality of life and lowering health care costs.3,4
HY-TAPE CAN REDUCE THE RISK OF PERISTOMAL SKIN DAMAGE

Hy-Tape is a gentle, secure, and waterproof medical adhesive that can effectively hold ostomy appliances in place for several days, even during exercise or other strenuous activity. This makes it one of the best adhesives for securing ostomy pouches, thereby lowering the risk of peristomal skin complication, reducing costs, and improving patients’ quality of life.

• **Hy-Tape is gentle and hypoallergenic** – Its hypoallergenic adhesive is zinc oxide based, helping to soothe delicate skin and prevent irritation. It is also easily removable and will not leave residue.

• **Hy-Tape is waterproof** – So it will not absorb liquids, thus reducing the risk of moisture-associated skin irritation and improving wear time.

• **Hy-Tape conforms to the body** – So it will not roll and stays secure longer.

• **Hy-Tape is UPF50+** – So patients can go outside without worrying about sun exposure on covered areas.

• **Hy-Tape is strong** – Although Hy-Tape’s adhesive is gentle, it is also extremely secure, requiring fewer changes and helping to reduce the risk of mechanical trauma.

If you would like to learn more about how Hy-Tape reduces costs and improves patients’ quality of life, contact one of our representatives or visit us online today at www.hytape.com.
REFERENCES


