

Skin Integrity Management for Neonates: A Collaborative Nursing and Occupational Therapy Approach in Protecting the Most Fragile Skin

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BACKGROUND

Preemies are susceptible to skin breakdown and injuries due to their fragile skin and immature epidermal development(1,2,3,4,5) Preemies are susceptible to skin tears, infiltrates and dermatitis and infection due to immature epidermal development, medical fragility and immobility (1,2,3,4). Collaborative, interdisciplinary approaches are essential to promote prevention, early identification, and effective management of skin and wound concerns in this vulnerable population(5)

PURPOSE

To describe the impact of a collaborative Nursing and Occupational Therapy approach in the assessment, prevention, and management of wound healing and skin integrity in the NICU population
To provide a clinical pathway in addressing skin breakdown, injuries
To provide evidence- based research approach on different products suitable to NICU population.

METHODS

This presentation/case-based review highlights an interdisciplinary care model involving NICU nursing and Occupational Therapy in wound and skin management. Nursing interventions included routine skin assessment, wound surveillance, dressing implementation, and bedside monitoring. Occupational Therapy interventions focused on positioning strategies, pressure redistribution, developmental support, adaptive handling techniques, splinting when indicated, and caregiver education to reduce additional skin stress and support healing. Review of different products manufacturing guidelines and literature review



OT assesses need for optimal positioning devices to aide in prevention of skin breakdown secondary to medical fragility and immobility; OT to provide developmentally supportive neuroprotective strategies

Collaboration with nursing staff to address skin integrity assessment
Pictures taken and uploaded in EPIC Media

Consult wound care to address complicated integumentary issues

Products	Indications	Contraindications	Use to use
Hydrocortisone cream	For 2 weeks and up	No clinical contraindications	Can be used on acute and chronic wounds
Hydrocortisone ointment	For 2 weeks and up	No clinical contraindications	Can be used on acute and chronic wounds
Hydrocortisone lotion	For 2 weeks and up	No clinical contraindications	Can be used on acute and chronic wounds
Hydrocortisone spray	For 2 weeks and up	No clinical contraindications	Can be used on acute and chronic wounds
Hydrocortisone powder	For 2 weeks and up	No clinical contraindications	Can be used on acute and chronic wounds
Hydrocortisone gel	For 2 weeks and up	No clinical contraindications	Can be used on acute and chronic wounds
Hydrocortisone foam	For 2 weeks and up	No clinical contraindications	Can be used on acute and chronic wounds
Hydrocortisone emulsion	For 2 weeks and up	No clinical contraindications	Can be used on acute and chronic wounds
Hydrocortisone suspension	For 2 weeks and up	No clinical contraindications	Can be used on acute and chronic wounds
Hydrocortisone solution	For 2 weeks and up	No clinical contraindications	Can be used on acute and chronic wounds
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Next Steps:

- Collaborate with NICU pharmacist and Infection Prevention Specialist
- Present to NICU IDT Meeting
- Educate other WOCN Developmental Therapists and NICU RNs
- Take steps to create clinical wound care guidelines for neonates
- Draft a clinical guideline for neonatal clinical pathways
- Create a quick reference for NICU staff Wound care Staff and Developmental therapists

RESULTS

Our team has created a preliminary clinical pathways with usage of different products that can be used on the most fragile skin, neonatal skin through evidence-based clinical review of manufacturer's guidelines and integumentary literature review
It is a team effort in skin injury prevention in our neonatal population.
Collaborative care planning and ongoing communication guided individualized plan of care.

CONCLUSIONS

Effective wound healing and skin management in the NICU extends beyond isolated treatment interventions and benefits from an interdisciplinary approach. Nursing and Occupational Therapy collaboration provides a comprehensive framework that integrates skin protection, developmental care, and individualized treatment strategies to support improved outcomes in medically fragile neonates. It is noted that there is a need for collaboration with infection prevention team. There is a need to create clinical wound care guidelines for neonatal population.

REFERENCES

Please refer to QR code

