Top Tips for Prescribing Dressings

Dressing Choice

- **Address underlying problems** e.g. soiling from incontinence, wrong choice of dressing etc.
- The expectation is that the wound and dressing type will **change over time** - **REVIEW** need before prescribing.
- **ONLY** prescribe silver dressings when infection is present with clinical signs/symptoms accounting for healing stage, exudate levels, wound type
- Use **local wound formulary** to guide cost effective choice of product.

Dressing size

- Larger dressings are usually more expensive than the smaller sizes and most wounds should ideally reduce in size. E.g. Duoderm extra thin 5cm x 10cm 78p, 9cm x 25cm £2.87, 9cm x 35cm £4.02 (Drug Tariff March 2018).
- Prescribe the **correct size** dressing for the wound.

Quantity

- Prescribe the **minimum quantity** of dressings sufficient to meet people's needs.
- Query quantities over 10 units/month - most dressings can stay in place for 3-5 days except on infected wounds.
- **Prescribe a maximum of 5 silver dressings** to cover a treatment period of 2 weeks (treatment should not generally exceed 2 weeks)
- **Prescribe the actual “number of dressings”** needed rather than “1OP”.

Acute Prescriptions ONLY

- Dressings should not be prescribed as long term repeat items to avoid wastage and facilitate timely reviews.

Frequency

- The frequency of dressing change needs to be carefully considered and should be appropriate for the wound and dressing type.
- **Prescribe a ‘dose’** to prevent excessive quantities being prescribed, e.g. Biatain 10cm x 10cm change every 5-7 days x 4.

Review

- Patients should be **assessed regularly**.
- **REVIEW** the wound and patient if the wound does not respond after **2 WEEKS** treatment with **silver dressings**. Refer to Tissue Viability Nurse.
- **STOP silver dressings** once signs of infection have resolved and the patient's condition is improved (not generally more than 2 weeks). **Reassess** at each dressing change.
- Add review date for dressing on computer system or care plan.

*red italic text denotes silver dressing specific information*
Wound Care Prescribing Information

Antimicrobial Dressings

1. Do not routinely choose antimicrobial (for example, silver, iodine or honey) dressings ahead of non-medicated dressings.
2. Antimicrobial dressings containing iodine or silver should be used only when clinical signs or symptoms of infection are present (or in certain circumstances under specialist guidance e.g. diabetic foot ulcers, exposed bone, very high risk patients).

Care Home Patients in Wandsworth

1. Nursing homes should only order dressings from GP surgeries
2. Residential homes - dressings should be prescribed by the district nursing team providing the patient’s wound care. Residential home staff should not request dressings direct from the GP surgeries.

For further information or advice on wound care, please contact:
Your Healthcare Tissue Viability Nurse Specialists 03333002350 or Email: clch.tvn@nhs.net

References & Resources:

1. British National Formulary online accessed via www.medicinescomplete.com
5. SIGN. Management of chronic venous leg ulcers. August 2010